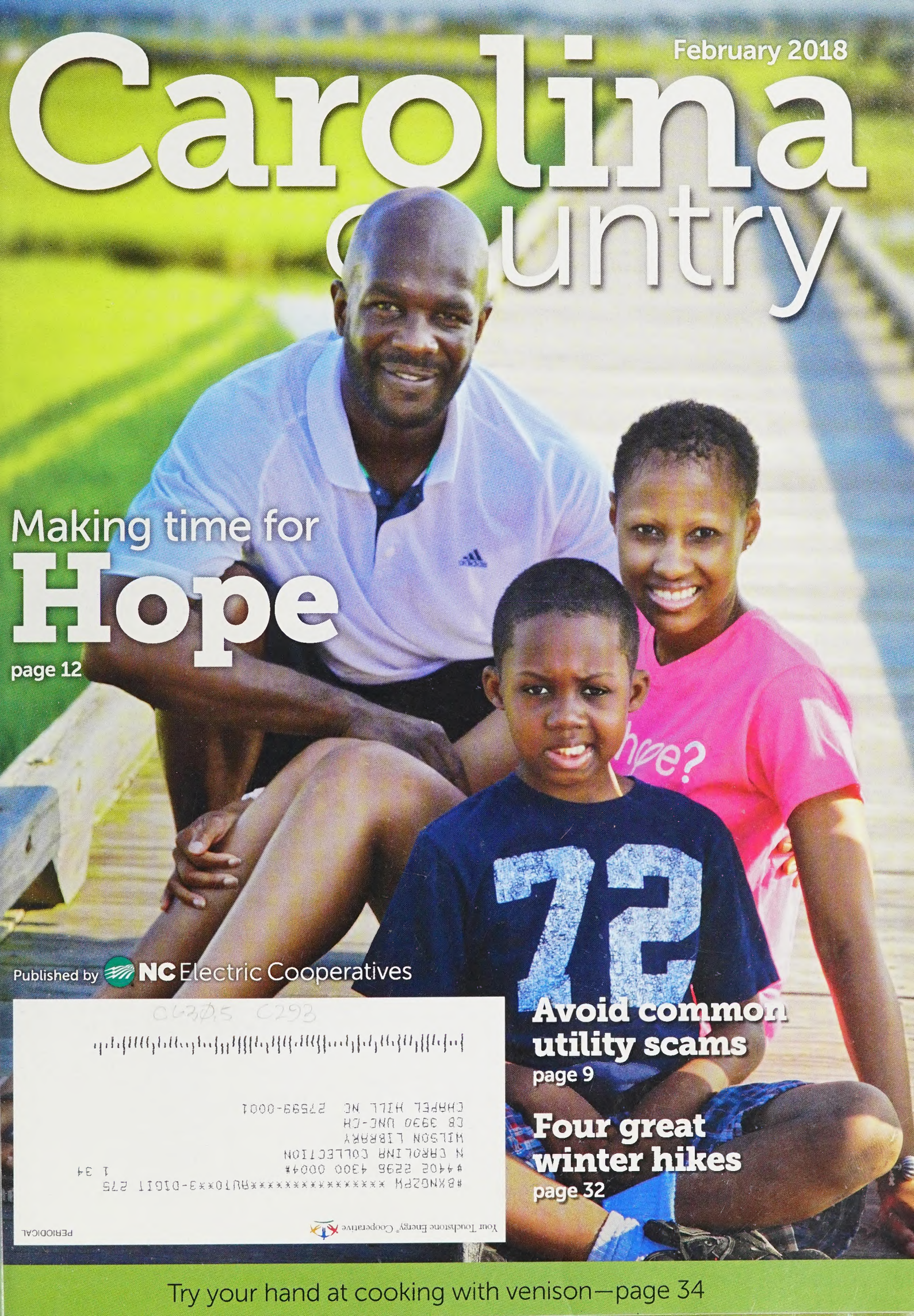
February 2018

Carolina Country



Making time for Hope

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Published by NC Electric Cooperatives

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

PERIODICAL

Try your hand at cooking with venison—page 34

Watering chores, water bills! Sweating behind a roaring mower! Spraying poison chemicals and digging weeds...

...you can end such lawn drudgery – here's how!

THE ONE TIME, LIFETIME LAWN SOLUTION!

Mow your Zoysia lawn once a month – or less! It rewards you with weed-free beauty all summer long.

7 Ways Our Amazoy™ Zoysia Lawn Saves You Time, Work and Money!

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Would you believe a lawn could look perfect when watered just once? In Iowa, the state's biggest Men's Garden club picked a Zoysia lawn as "top lawn – nearly perfect." Yet, this lawn had been watered only once all summer to August!

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2 NO NEED TO DIG UP OLD GRASS

Plant Amazoy *your way* in an old lawn or new ground. Set plugs into holes in the soil checkerboard style. Plugs spread to create a lush, thick lawn, driving out weeds and unwanted growth. Easy instructions included with every order.

3 ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

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Meyer Zoysia Grass was perfected by the U.S. Gov't, released in cooperation with the U.S. Golf Association as a superior grass.

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Plant it from plugs.

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Guaranteed to grow new green shoots within 45-60 days or we'll replace it FREE – for up to 1 year – just call us. We ONLY ship you living genuine Amazoy Zoysia grass harvested direct from our farms. Easy planting and watering instructions are included with each order. Every Reorder assumes success of previous orders (plantings), voiding any previous guarantees, but initiating a **new** one-year guarantee.

6 CHOKES OUT CRABGRASS AND WEEDS ALL SUMMER

Your established Amazoy Zoysia lawn grows so thick, it simply stops crabgrass and most summer weeds from germinating!

7 NOW 3 WAYS TO START YOUR AMAZOY ZOYSIA LAWN!

1) Freestyle plugs come in uncut sheets containing a maximum of 150 - 1" plugs that can be planted up to 1 ft. apart. Freestyle plugs allow you to make each plug bigger and plant further apart – less cutting and planting – you decide.

2) New Super Plugs come precut into individual 3"x3" plugs ready-to-plant (minimum 1 per 4 sq. ft.). They arrive in easy to handle trays of 15 Super Plugs. Save more time and get your new lawn even faster!

3) Amazoy Approved Seed-As The Zoysia Specialists for 60+years, we finally have a Zoysia seed available that meets our standards and homeowners expectations.

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Freestyle Plugs You decide how big to cut the plugs. Each grass sheet can produce up to 150-1 in. plugs. Plant minimum 1 plug per sq. ft.

Max Plugs*	Free Plugs	Grass Sheets*	Your PRICE	+ Shipping	SAVINGS
150	–	1	$15.95	$8.50	–
500	100	4	$50.00	$15.00	33%
750	150	6	$66.00	$19.00	41%
1100	400	10	$95.00	$30.00	48%
2000	1000	20	$165.00	$45.00	57%

Super Plugs Precut plugs 3 inches by 3 inches. READY TO PLANT Packed in trays of 15 Super Plugs. Plant minimum 1 plug per 4 sq. ft.

Super Plugs	Free Plugs	Trays	Your PRICE	+ Shipping	SAVINGS
15	–	1	$24.95	$8.50	–
60	15	5	$90.00	$20.00	34%
95	25	8	$110.00	$30.00	47%
120	30	10	$125.00	$35.00	50%
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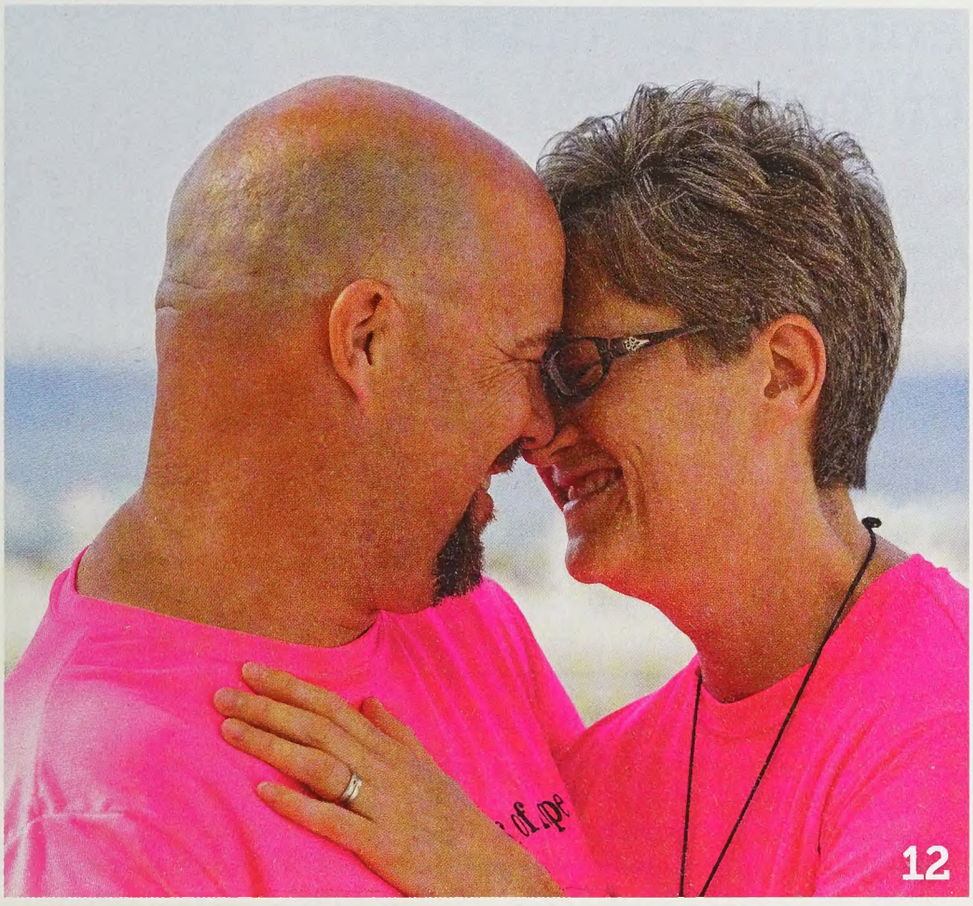

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On the Cover

Candice and Charles Morrison posed with their son during an Emerald Isle retreat for breast cancer patients in 2012. Read more about the inspiring program on page 12. Photo by Little Pink Houses of Hope.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

Roadside Attractions

There's still time to share your favorite roadside attractions from across the state! We'll feature the best in our April travel issue. See page 15 for details.

Carolina country

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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

Your co-op's board of directors authorizes a subscription to Carolina Country on behalf of the membership at a cost of less than $5 per year.

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Building Confidence on the Court

By Ashley Williams

My experience at the University of North Carolina's basketball camp, which I attended in 2007 through a Touchstone Energy Sports Camp scholarship, is one that has stuck with me. Growing up, I was all about basketball and a die-hard UNC basketball fan.

I was ecstatic when I found out that I was selected to attend the camp. The camp was the first overnight basketball camp I had ever attended, which was big for me. I remember my parents dropping me off and my dad, embarrassingly, introducing me to everybody in the dorm during move-in. When I first got there, I was nervous and scared due to it being my first time playing basketball away from my family and without my twin brother playing with me. During the first scrimmage I was incredibly timid, with my parents looking on before they left. But the moment they left it hit me: it was just me and basketball for the next week.

> "It was just me and basketball for the next week."

I quickly made friends and immediately enjoyed the experience. I was living my dream life, getting up in the morning to do drills and stations with UNC's current players, which around that time included Tyler Hansbrough and Ty Lawson. By the end of the first full day, I felt comfortable and optimistic. My age group got to do all our station work and play all our games in the practice gym, which I really enjoyed. I also was selected to play in the Camper/Counselor game in the Smith Center, which was extremely exciting for me. The person in charge of my age group, ironically, became the first college coach to offer me a full ride scholarship six years later. His name was Wes Miller, a former Tar Heel and current UNCG head coach. Alongside him was another former player, Jackie Manuel, who I grew up watching on my favorite UNC championship team (2004-05).

The team I was placed on ended up winning our age group throughout the camp. I gained a lot of confidence that week. Going into the camp I was a timid player, and honestly, I came out with a different view of how dominant I could be. On top of all the fun I had, my team won our "championship game" in a sudden death overtime game—the perfect ending to that incredible week.

From then on, I had a different view and different goals for myself as a basketball player. I wanted to be an NCAA Division I basketball player, and I wanted to be a player that younger kids could look up to for direction—the way I looked at the North Carolina players at the camp. I developed a great work ethic from those dreams that started at the camp, which led me to work to become an all-state player in high school and ultimately a Division I basketball player at Western Carolina University.

Fast forward 10 years from the camp: In December, I found myself playing in the Dean Smith Center against UNC here in my senior season at Western, which really brought the experience full circle.

I strongly recommend attending a major sports camp. It was an inspiring and unforgettable experience!

Ashley Williams (#24) received a 2007 Sports Camp Scholarship from Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative. He is currently a senior at Western Carolina University majoring in communication with a concentration in public relations.

Sports Camp Scholarships

Each year, North Carolina's electric cooperatives accept applications from middle school students for summer basketball camps at the University of North Carolina and NC State University. See page 8 for details.

THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

Healthy Living

Staying healthy doesn't always require a dramatic lifestyle change—sneaking healthy diet options and small exercises into daily routines can make a difference. We offer some tips and recipes to that end in this issue, as well as hear about a North Carolinian who is giving hope to breast cancer patients across the country.

—Scott Gates, editor

Comforting Sunflowers

In the January issue of Carolina Country, there is a series of photos taken by members and one in particular stood out for very personal reasons: "Sunflower Surveillance," submitted by Amanda Quinzi, a member of Haywood EMC (page 16). We lost my mother-in-law last May in a tragic auto accident, and her favorite flower was the sunflower. Since then, sunflowers seem to pop up in the most unexpected places and bring us all great comfort. They say cardinals represent those we lose but Mom would have to be different!

Following my mother-in-law's death, we had thank-you cards printed with a photo of the sunflowers each of us carried at her funeral. She always said "when you can't see the sunshine, be the sunshine," and these precious words have carried us the last six months since the accident.

So, as I was looking through the most recent issue of Carolina Country, I was captivated by Amanda's photo and thought of Mom watching down on all of us from heaven. I could not help but smile and feel warmed on a cold and gray winter's day. Thank you, Amanda, for sharing your beautiful photo and for being the sunshine for me when I could not see it.

Valerie Parrella, Waxhaw
A member of Union Power

Famous Pine Warbler

A Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative member from Cape Carteret was kind enough to submit this edited photo identifying our January cover model. Keep an eye out for these little guys in pine forests this winter, when their numbers are increased by migrants from the north.

Baking Spice?

Q: Could you please tell me what you are referring to when it calls for "baking spice" in the muffin recipe ("Carrot Cake Muffins," January 2018, page 42)? Thank you.

Deborah Collins, submitted on carolinacountry.com

A: Sure! You can use any sort of spice mixture that uses those typically used in baked goods. Different companies call them different things—something like apple pie spice, pumpkin pie spice, baking spice—any that have that sort of mixture (cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, allspice, ginger, etc.). Or just use your preference. I'm a cinnamon gal, but I don't really care for cloves, nutmeg and allspice, so I tend to go heavy on cinnamon.

Wendy Perry, regular contributor to Carolina Kitchen

carolinacountry.com/recipes
Additional notes from Wendy, including her go-to spice sources, are posted in the comments section for the Carrot Cake Muffins recipe on carolinacountry.com.

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Please contact your electric co-op directly to ensure prompt service. Visit carolinacountry.com/co-ops to find yours online.

Hooking for a Cause

Catawba Crafters group crochets warmth for those in need

by Jo Boone

On most Monday evenings in a small library in the Mountain View community near Hickory, a group of 15 to 20 men and women are crocheting. The crochet group, known as the Catawba Crafters, boasts almost 200 members, both men and women, ages 15 to 80.

In just four years, members have created and distributed more than 7,800 items to local homeless shelters and soup kitchens, hospital neo-intensive care units, cancer treatment centers and nursing homes, with more than 2,100 items by the end of 2017 alone.

The group recently donated 600 hats to two soup kitchens in Catawba County over the Christmas holidays. The creations are distributed throughout the Lincolnton/Newton/Hickory area, into surrounding towns and counties.

What began almost 30 years ago with just a mother and daughter helping those in need has turned into quite a production.

I co-founded the group with DeeDee Griffis. But it all began in 1985 when my mother, Earlene Propst, and I decided to help the local homeless by crocheting and handing out hats. We would drive around town after working second-shift hours handing the hats out to the homeless, many of whom had been discharged from Broughton Hospital with nowhere to go but the streets. The group now also creates and distributes chemo hats, lap afghans, scarves, wheelchair shawls, palm protectors and baby beanies. We crochet washcloths that double as medicine bags for missionary groups who go to places such as Haiti. We basically make any needed item that can be crocheted. All of this is done through the kindness of those who crochet and those who donate yarn to us.

Jo Boone (far right) and a few fellow Catawba Crafters distribute items at a local homeless shelter.

Catawba Crafters

Crocheted items include these tiny hats for newborns in neo-intensive care units.

Catawba Crafters

Our little group of "Old Hookers" love what we do to help those in need and love the looks on the faces of the people who receive the items.

Recently, a homeless man who received a hat asked about the bottom two rows of reflective yarn on his hat. I explained that we add a row or two of reflective yarn to make the wearer a bit more visible in car lights when walking at night. I noticed a tear running down his face. He said he was a Vietnam Vet and was used to people avoiding him because of being homeless, but this helped him realize that there are people who still care enough to make his life a bit easier.

Anyone could go buy a 'boggan for a dollar or so, he said, but to know that there are people who actually take the time to crochet it and then add reflective yarn to make him safer, made him feel all warm inside.

This is why we do it. We show people that there are folks who care and want to make their lives a bit easier.

Jo Boone is the co-founder of Catawba Crafters. For more information or to donate yarn, contact Boone at gretchengirl@gmail.com.

Send Your Story

If you have an inspirational story for "Where Life Takes Us," send it to us. For details, go online: carolinacountry.com/inspiration

"Blue face watches are on the discerning gentleman's 'watch list'."
– watchtime.com
★★★★★
"The quality of their watches is equal to many that can go for ten times the price or more."
— Jeff from McKinney, TX

STONE COLD FOX

So good-looking...heads will turn. So unbelievably-priced...jaws will drop.

Every once in a while a timepiece comes along that's so incredibly good looking, masterfully equipped and jaw-droppingly priced, that it stops us stone cold. A watch that can take you seamlessly from the 18th hole to the board room. A watch that blurs the line betweens sports watch and dress watch. We're talking the ***Blue Stone Chronograph***, and it sits at the top of the discerning gentleman's watch list.

Striking in appearance and fully equipped with features, this is a watch of substance. The ***Blue Stone*** merges the durability of steel with the precision of crystal movement that's accurate to 0.2 seconds a day. Both an analog and digital watch, the ***Blue Stone*** keeps time with pinpoint accuracy in two time zones.

The watch's handsome steel blue dial seamlessly blends an analog watch face with a stylish digital display. It's a stopwatch, calendar, and alarm. Plus, the ***Blue Stone*** resists water up to 30 meters, making it up for water adventures.

A watch with these features would easily cost you thousands if you shopped big names. But overcharging to justify an inflated brand name makes us blue in the face. Which is why we make superior looking and performing timepieces priced to please. Decades of experience in engineering enables Stauer to put quality on your wrist and keep your money in your pocket.

Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Experience the ***Blue Stone Chronograph*** for 30 days. If you're not convinced you got excellence for less, send it back for a refund of the item price.

Time is running out. Originally priced at $395, the ***Blue Stone Chronograph*** was already generating buzz among watch connoisseurs, but with the price slashed to **$69**, we can't guarantee this limited-edition timepiece will last. So, call today!

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Apply to Attend Touchstone Energy Sports Camp

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are currently accepting applications from middle-school students for full scholarships to attend basketball camp on college campuses this summer (see "Building Confidence on the Court," page 4).

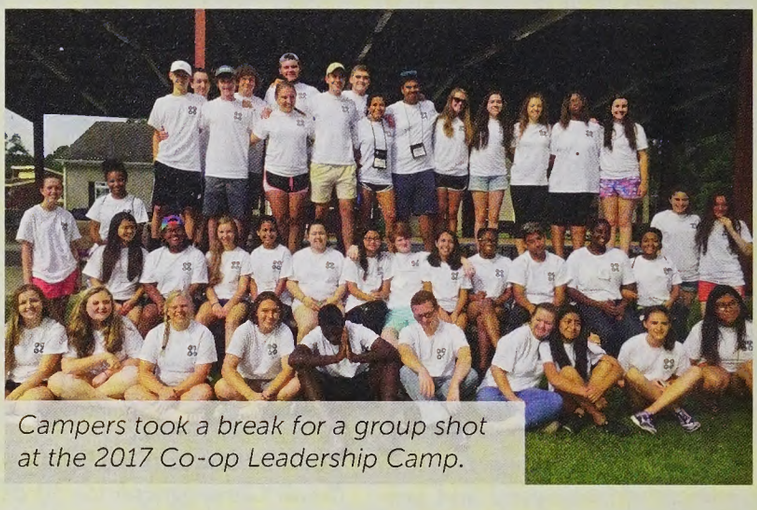
Young women can apply to attend the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp June 10–13 at NC State University in Raleigh, and young men can apply to attend the Roy Williams Basketball Camp June 16–20 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Campers will stay in dorms and work with the coaches, and current and former players at the overnight camps. Students who are currently in fifth, sixth or seventh grade are eligible to apply. NCAA rules prohibit scholarships to students who will be in ninth grade next year (currently eighth graders) as they are considered prospects.

Statewide, more than 50 students will receive Touchstone Energy Sports Camp scholarships this year. Interested students can download scholarship applications at bit.ly/sportscamps-2018, due March 31, 2018.

Co-op Camp Builds Future Leaders

Applications are being accepted for the 2018 Co-op Leadership Camp, to be held June 18–22 at the NC FFA Center at White Lake. The camp is facilitated by the Cooperative Council of North Carolina (CCNC) and supported by its members, including North Carolina's electric cooperatives.



Campers took a break for a group shot at the 2017 Co-op Leadership Camp.

The camp is open to rising high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. Programs concentrate on:

- The cooperative way of doing business;
- Developing leadership skills and qualities;
- Building a better understanding and appreciation for cooperatives; and
- Recognizing outstanding NC youth possessing leadership qualities.

All youth who attend are sponsored by CCNC member cooperatives, including electric co-ops, or Cooperative Extension 4H Clubs.

"This allows campers to represent their co-op or organization throughout the week of camp, and gives youth an opportunity to have a meaningful experience," said CCNC Executive Director Emily Nail.

Applications, available at bit.ly/co-op-camp, are due May 15.

Countries Collaborate on Energy Data

Officials from the United States, Canada and Mexico recently collaborated to launch a website (nacei.org) that features energy-related data, maps, analyses and references from the three countries.

The "North American Cooperation on Energy Information" website is part of a collaborative effort to share publicly available materials to improve energy information and energy outlooks for North America.

"Collaboration among the three countries has already improved data quality for some data series," the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said.

Canada and Mexico are key energy trade partners with the United States, with Canada being our largest energy trading partner, according to EIA analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. Energy accounted for about 5 percent of the value of all U.S. exports to Canada and more than 19 percent of the value of all U.S. imports from Canada in 2016.

The value of U.S. energy imports from Canada was $53 billion in 2016, while the value of U.S. energy exports to Canada was $14 billion.

Avoid the Most Common Utility Scams

Imposter utility scammers are targeting consumers throughout the country every day. These scammers rely on scare tactics to get their targets to take action, including threats of everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to a home.

Scammers typically use phone, in-person and online tactics to target consumers, according to Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS), a consortium of more than 100 electric, water and natural gas utilities—including the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Here are tips from UUAS to avoid the most common utility scams out there:

1 Hang Up on Calls from Crooks

Hang up if you receive a call demanding immediate payment of a utility bill to avoid disconnection or shutoff. Never be fooled by a phony caller ID; never return a call to the call-back phone number provided by an unknown caller; and never provide any payment or personal information to a caller you do not know. If you have questions, call your electric cooperative at its phone number on your monthly bill or its website. Visit carolinacountry.com/our-coops for a list of co-ops across the state.

2 Keep Cell Phones Safe

Do not reply to text messages or click on links you receive from people you do not know. Never install apps from text messages, and if you have any doubt about a text message, exercise caution and do not open it.

3 Shut the Door on Scammers

Be suspicious of anyone who arrives at your home or business without an appointment demanding immediate payment, offering utility products or services, or requesting access to your home to check your electrical wiring, water pipes, natural gas pipes, appliances or other utility-related issues. Do not let unknown individuals into your home. If you have any questions, call your electric cooperative.

4 Ask for Proper ID

If you feel you are in personal danger, call 911. Always ask to see a company photo identification, and if you have doubts about a person at your door claiming to be from your utility, call your utility company to verify their information and work to be done before allowing them into your home or business.

5 Delete Suspicious Emails

If you receive an email from an unknown sender or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email or send it to your spam folder. Contact your electric cooperative if a suspicious email includes its logo or other utility-related information.

6 Ensure Website Security

A secure website starts with "https://"—the "s" is for secure. In general, "http:" websites are vulnerable to attack. Remember the best protection against phishing and malware is being careful about what email attachments you open, keeping software updated and maintained, and installing a quality antivirus program.

NEVER give out personal, financial or electric account information
if someone contacts you demanding payment.

HANG UP and quickly report suspicious calls
to law enforcement authorities.

CONTACT your electric co-op to report the call
and check your account status.

For more information and the latest updates on utility scams, visit UUAS at utilitiesunited.org. The organization also offers a Consumer's Guide to Impostor Utility Scams, available for download at bit.ly/uuas-consumersguide.

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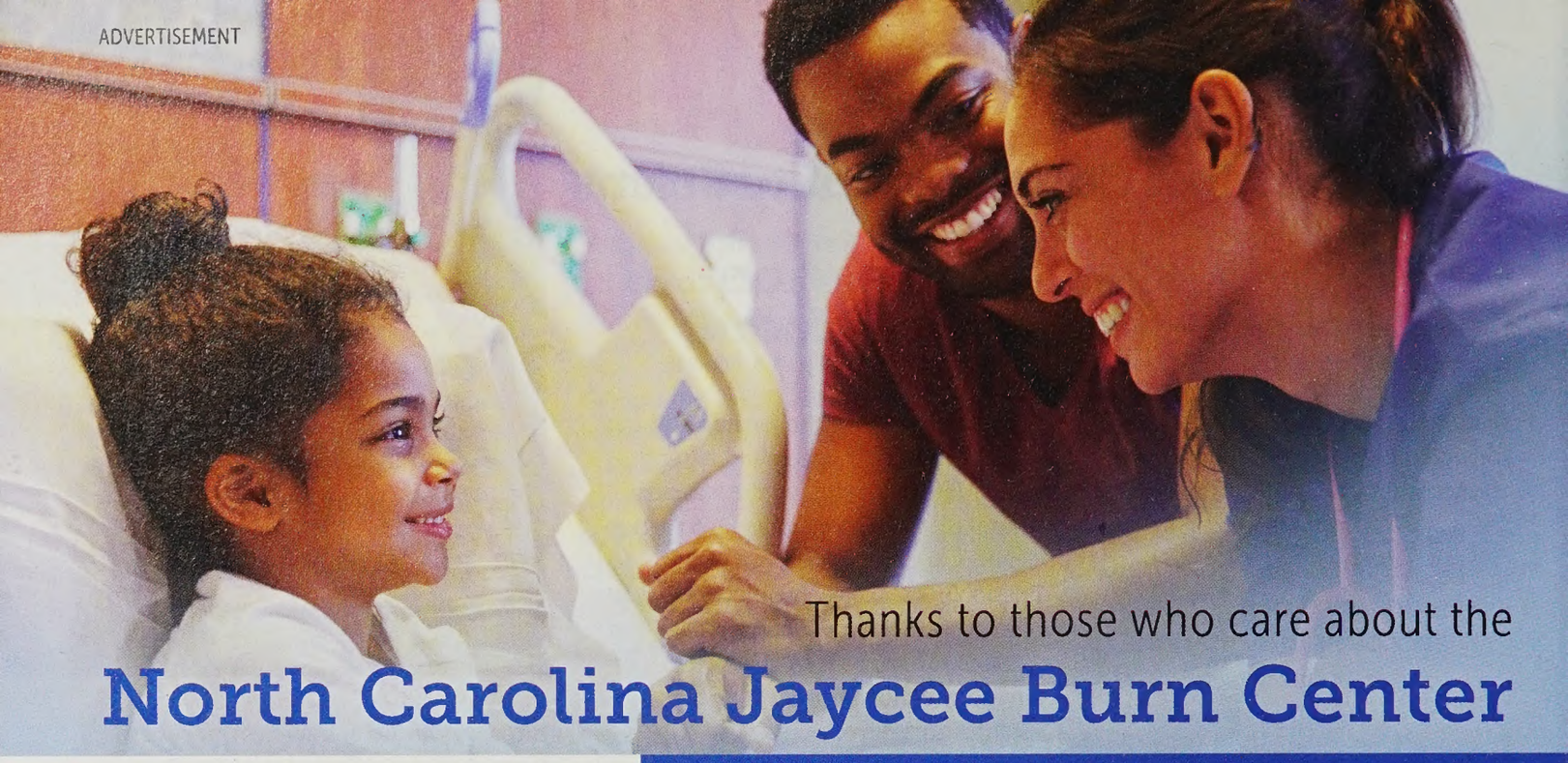

Thanks to those who care about the

North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center

North Carolina's electric cooperatives hosted their 19th annual golf tournament and fundraiser in October 2017, raising $146,193 for the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center, a division of the UNC Department of Surgery. Electric cooperatives, in partnership with more than 80 organizations and individuals, have donated more than $1.8 million to the Burn Center over the years.

Beyond providing the very best in compassionate care, the Burn Center's mission extends to advancing burn prevention education and outreach, innovative treatment, research, rehabilitation and life-long aftercare. Its success has led to the Burn Center's recognition as one of the best comprehensive burn centers in the world.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives are grateful to all of the organizations and individuals who contributed to the success of this fundraiser and the Burn Center. With the help of generous donors like these, the Burn Center can continue its groundbreaking work in helping burn patients become burn survivors.

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Hope-Filled

Little Pink Houses of Hope provides welcome refuge for breast cancer patients

By Hannah Miller

Toni Dursteler with her daughter Shayli.

Retreats

A woman kayaking on Oak Island's Davis Canal wears a pink-billed cap with her orange life vest, a way to cover hair thinned by breast cancer treatment.

Another breast cancer patient navigating the canal's calm waters confesses that her life vest hurts her tender chest. She paddles anyway, the vest safely stowed at arm's reach.

In the evening, two three-year-olds chase a 13-year-old around a church basement as volunteer cooks prepare ravioli for an evening dinner. In the meal line, the conversation turns from the beauty of Oak Island Lighthouse to hot tubs to a pontoon boat ride that ran unthreateningly aground. The Atlantic Ocean pulses softly nearby.

Such normalcy is the goal of Little Pink Houses of Hope, a grassroots organization begun by a former breast cancer patient to give a free week of vacation to families struggling with the disease. The program, which in 2018 will be enjoyed by more than 170 families, offers those drained emotionally and financially a week to be "completely free of doctors, hospitals and all the pain," explains former cancer patient Linda Rudeseal, a Brunswick EMC member who is one of hundreds of volunteers who make the week easy and fun for guests.

Volunteers like Linda and her husband, Bill, provide everything from free vacation home rentals to the day-to-day necessities of a vacation, like paper plates and beach towels. Local churches play a major role, providing meals and gifts. Businesses, organizations and individuals chip in with kayaking lessons, fishing and aquarium trips, even maintenance work on hot tubs and pools.

Another former patient, Carol Taylor of Bogue, volunteers at the Emerald Isle retreat. The Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative member has been cancer-free for 12 years, but vividly remembers the painful days when "I prayed so hard that I could live to see one of my grandchildren born." She had none then; now she has 11 ("they just sprouted"). Her experience with the illness helps her when filling gift baskets that her church, Bethlehem United Methodist of Bogue, puts in the vacation houses to await the visitors.

"If they're in treatment, I make sure they get lemon drops to soothe their throats, to keep them from being nauseous," Taylor says. "Somebody told me during my treatment, and it worked. I have a wrap in there, in case they get a chill."

The gift baskets, Taylor explains, send a simple message: "I care for you."

"Every little bit helps when you're in a bad place," she says.

Hannah Miller

Hannah Miller

Top: *Thirteen-year-old Spenser greets his mom, Brandy Medlin of New London, and 3-year-old brother Titus after a trip out on Davis Canal.*

Above: *Linda Rudeseal, who has survived two bouts with cancer, was eager to volunteer to help other patients, as was her husband Bill.*

The idea for Little Pink Houses came from Jeanine Patten-Coble of Burlington, a former breast cancer patient, who envisioned a vacation place for families struggling with the disease.

Little Pink Houses of HOPE

A group of Little Pink families relax at the St. John retreat.

One woman's dream

Little Pink began seven years ago with Jeanine Patten-Coble of Burlington, who was a high school history teacher and professional educational trainer in NC for 15 years before being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009. The diagnosis came just before a planned trip to Hatteras Island. She went on vacation with her family despite the news, and when she saw boarded-up houses sitting unused on the beach, an idea was born.

Breast cancer treatment sometimes leaves families with little time or energy to connect with one another, she thought. Why couldn't vacation rental properties be made available free, one week a year, to other families struggling with her diagnosis?

She started pushing the idea, and by 2011, the first Little Pink retreat got underway with five vacation sites and 40 families. In the years since, it has served 563 families, with a goal of hosting 11 families at each of 16 sites in 2018.

Five NC beach areas are among the 2018 hosts: Oak Island, Emerald Isle, Buxton, Hatteras and Pleasure Island. The goal for 2020 is 20 sites.

Little Pink has to limit the number of sites to the number of houses available. At Oak Island, there are often enough offers to create a waiting list, which came in handy when Hurricane Irma forced rescheduling last summer.

Some owners who had pledged their houses for the first date even turned around and offered them again, says Kristin Goode of Oak Island Accommodations, which coordinated the offers. People seem to be inspired by different motivations, says Goode, recalling that one owner confided that his wife had recently died of cancer.

Eva Layne and daughter Adrianna

Keith and Cheryl Schlueter

During the Oak Island retreat, Davis Canal was full of Little Pink families with Skylar Keaton, 3, and mom Jessie of Charlotte leading the pack.

Upcoming season

Donations of housing, money and volunteer services for the 2018 season are being accepted now online (littlepink.org).

Enrollment applications are being accepted online as well (through July 13, 2018). Applicants must either be in treatment for breast cancer or have completed treatment in the past year, with preference given to those still in treatment. Applicants may list several choices of retreats, and if one of their choices is closed they are considered for the others. When enrollment at a site is full, as is Pleasure Island April 22–28, it's marked "closed" on the application site.

Close to 2,000 applications come in each year from patients, including men, explaining why they want to come.

"I think this is the best vacation we've ever had," says Janet Grubbs of Lexington, South Carolina, one of the kayakers on the Oak Island trip. Her sons Josh, 16, Jonathan, 21, and Michael, 25, joined her for the vacation. "Everything we've been through in the past year...to come here and spend time with my boys...We don't [ordinarily] get to do that."

Hannah Miller is a Carolina Country contributing writer who lives in Charlotte.

CAROLINA COUNTRY
scenes
Photo of the month

Ice-capped Cliffs
While driving on NC-215, my wife and I were struck by the beauty of the ice on the rocky cliffs. After a few photos, we continued our trip in celebration of our 32nd anniversary.

Christopher Tipton, Brevard
A member of Haywood EMC

The Photo of the Month comes from those who scored an honorable mention from the judges in our 2018 photo contest ("Carolina Country Scenes," January 2018). See even more Photos of the Week on our website carolinacountry.com.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Your Favorite Roadside Attraction

One of the best parts of a road trip is what you find along the way—the unexpected museum where you stretched your legs, or the giant metal chicken that made for a great photo op. For our April 2018 travel guide, we need to hear from readers where we should stop! We will pay $25 for each submission that is printed in our April issue.

Rules

Deadline: February 15, 2018

One entry per household

Limit text to 100 words or less.

Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and email address or phone number with your entry.

If submitting a photo, prints should be a minimum of 4 x 6 inches.

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Undeniable Truths of Heart Health

Diet and exercise remain keys to keeping your ticker in top form

By Debra Gibson Isaacs

Although most of us wish it weren't true—and wish there were a magic pill to keep our hearts healthy—exercise and diet remain the undeniable keys to a healthy heart. We know that, but maybe we're too busy for one more thing, can't afford a gym membership, are too tired after work, want to spend what little time we have with our children...the list of excuses goes on.

Taking steps to improve heart health can be just that—steps. Try making subtle changes to slowly work toward a heart-healthy lifestyle. Chapel Hill native Sonya Angelone, a registered dietitian nutritionist and national spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (eatright.org), has suggestions to make incremental improvements in both diet and exercise.

Sneak more nutrition into your diet

Confusion abounds about nutrition. Eggs are packed with protein, yet egg yolks have cholesterol. Butter is better than margarine—or is it that margarine is better than butter?

Sometimes it is hard to keep up with the latest science, sometimes the science changes, and sometimes we just can't remember what the science says.

Angelone spends her days counseling people about nutrition. Before she reveals the answers to some of the biggest nutritional conundrums, she says there is one important point to remember about nutrition: There is no one-size-fits all. Each of us is different and can process food differently. Age and activity level make a difference. Medical conditions also can alter nutritional recommendations.

Now, drumroll please, here are Angelone's answers to two of the most common and perplexing questions about nutrition:

Eggs

"Although the newest dietary guidelines remove the limit of eggs and dietary cholesterol, they still recommend avoiding

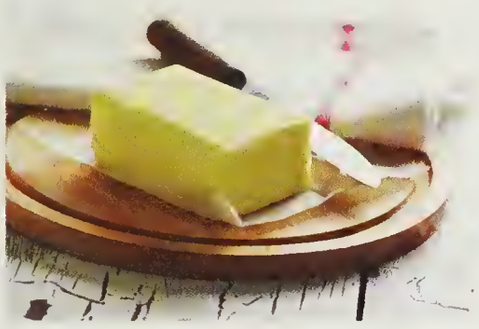
Always consult your doctor for any matters relating to your health. This information is not intended to diagnose any medical condition or to replace your healthcare professional

excess. Eggs are a nutritious food, but whether they are good or bad depends on the person. Genes help determine how someone metabolizes nutrients, including cholesterol. Some people absorb excess dietary cholesterol and should limit eggs (one of the richest source in our diets). But, most people can consume eggs regularly. They just need to be sure they aren't cooked in excess oil and aren't paired with bacon, hash browns, white toast and butter!

"Also, the recommendations are different for a healthy person wanting to eat a healthy diet versus someone with heart disease who is trying to reverse their disease. For the latter, I limit dietary cholesterol, including eggs. The American Heart Association (heart.org) is a good site for great information."

Her stance on eggs: Neutral.

Suggestion: Ask your physician to run a cholesterol balance test. This will tell you whether your high cholesterol is because your liver makes too much cholesterol or because you absorb too much cholesterol.



Butter or margarine?

"I do not like margarine ever. It has trans fats. That simply means that something has been artificially added to make the margarine harden into a stick or tub. The producer transformed liquid oil into a solid fat by adding hydrogen atoms—thus the term hydrogenated. This process changes the fat into an unhealthy fat.

"Now there has been so much pressure from the government that producers are going back to using transformed fats. While they are not using palm oil, which is not healthy, coconut oil is not healthy either. The liver uses saturated fats to make cholesterol.

"Some people believe that coconut oil is not bad because of a study. There were two groups, one which substituted sugar for fat and another group which substituted coconut oil for fat. It wasn't that the coconut oil was better. It was that the sugar is so bad."

Her stance on butter/margarine: Butter is always the best choice.

Suggestion: Try nut butter instead.

Sneak more exercise into your day

"Incorporate subtle exercises into things you already do," Angelone suggests. She rejects the notion that we have to have chunks of time or money to improve our heart health. (The only caveat is to make sure you have no limitations or injuries. If you do, check with your physician before trying any of these ideas.)

Nuts for Nuts

Not only do nuts taste good, but most provide significant health benefits, according to Angelone (just limit consumption to 1 ounce of nuts a day; they're high in calories). Each nut provides different nutritional benefits:

- **Almonds** have more calcium than any other nut, plus nearly 9 grams of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, 6 grams of protein, and 3.5 grams of fiber per ounce.
- **Walnuts** are rich in polyunsaturated fats, particularly an omega-6 fatty acid called linoleic acid the most abundant one. They also contain a relatively high percentage of a healthy omega-3 fat called alpha-linolenic acid.
- **Pistachios** have high levels of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. They are especially high in vitamin B6, thiamine, and copper.
- **Brazil nuts** (pictured above) are high in protein, fiber, selenium, thiamine, copper and magnesium. However, high levels of selenium can be toxic, so watch quantities. (A single Brazil nut can contain 68 to 91 micrograms of selenium; the daily upper limit for most adults is 400 mcg, according to the National Institutes of Health.)
- **Pecans** contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, several B vitamins and zinc. One ounce provides 10 percent of the recommended daily value for fiber.
- **Macadamia nuts** contain the most heart-healthy monounsaturated fat per serving.
- **Cashews** are very high in iron, zinc and magnesium

Simple, Heart-Healthy Recipes

From nutritionist Sonya Angelone

Easy Chicken and Vegetables

2–3 pieces of boneless chicken breast
1 small bag of baby carrots, sliced
1 small bag of fingerling potatoes, sliced
1 chopped onion
1 bay leaf
1 sprig of thyme
1 sprig of rosemary
Parsley if desired

Combine ingredients in a pot. Add just enough water to cover. Simmer 20 minutes or until cooked.

Remove cooked chicken from broth and shred (let it cool a bit, then shred using two forks). Return shredded chicken to broth.

Season with black pepper, a pinch of salt and a bit of parsley just before serving. This is great for dinner and lunches.

Fruit Smoothie

1 cup coconut water
1 cup organic soy milk
1 frozen banana
½ cup berries

Add ingredients to blender and blend until smooth. Optional additions (before blending) include chia seeds, flaxseeds, cottage cheese or protein powder, and nut butter.

Quick Dessert: Cinnamon Bananas

Preheat oven or toaster oven to 350 degrees. Cut a banana into small pieces. Place on aluminum foil and sprinkle with cinnamon (honey also can be added). Bake for 10 minutes. This is quite sweet and will satisfy most sweet cravings.

"For example, do a 'wall chair' when on the phone or while brushing your teeth," she says, explaining that she finds time for such exercises when she can, including during the phone interview for this article. "I just put my back against the wall, my feet on the floor, and slide down the wall until you could set a book on my knees or a child could sit on my lap. This is engaging my quadriceps, lowering my blood sugar from just eating lunch, burning extra calories and strengthening my legs so I am less likely to fall."

Angelone has more examples—all simple and cost-free or very low cost.

"Lunge down the hall," she suggests. "It only takes a few lunges a day to make a difference. Or alternately stand on your tiptoes and flat on your feet. This strengthens your lower legs."

Another idea is to hold both arms out to your side with a book in one arm. Your body will look like a "T." Hold that position until your arms shake. Stop and repeat. How many can you do? It doesn't matter, according to Angelone. The idea is to go from where you are to an ability to do more.

Here are another few examples:

- While sitting in a chair or watching television, contract your abdominal muscles 20 times.
- While sitting in a chair, lift your toes, put them back on the floor, and repeat. This strengthens your shins.
- While sitting at the table, pedal a foot cycle.

"The key is to avoid just being sedentary," Angelone says. "If you have a sedentary job, get up every half hour. Do something. Go outside and walk around the building, go up and down a flight of steps. Engage your muscles."

Debra Gibson Isaacs is a writer and photographer from Lexington, Kentucky, who writes for electric cooperatives.

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A Pit Master Turns to Turkey

Mike Neal serves up a healthy option for barbecue lovers

Story and photos by Tina Vasquez

In a state where pork barbecue is king, a man who does turkey barbecue is something of an anomaly. But Mike Neal is OK with that—and in his defense, he's smoking whole, North Carolina-raised turkeys in an Eastern North Carolina style. Traditionalists will get the vinegary bite they love, with a fraction of the fat.

Neal is the owner of Hickory Tree Turkey BBQ (hickorytreebbq.com), a quickly growing barbecue business in Greensboro. As of December, Neal has a storefront, two catering trucks and was recently approved to do wholesale. He also is looking to expand to another location, possibly Durham. Neal took over Hickory Tree from its original owner, Joe Roundtree, a North Carolina native who, after receiving a heart transplant, began smoking turkeys as a healthier alternative to pork barbeque.

Roundtree sold both pork and turkey barbecue out of Hickory Tree's storefront, and Neal has struggled with whether he should follow suit.

"North Carolina is all about pork barbecue, and I've asked myself if I should be doing pork, but at the end of the day I'm happy with what we're doing," Neal says. "Turkey has this halo over it as a 'super protein' because it's a meat without many of the adverse health issues that come with other proteins. People come in all the time and tell me they're glad we're around because they have health issues that have made pork off limits."

Anyone who has cooked a large turkey for Thanksgiving knows the birds are hard to cook well. They overcook easily. As Neal puts it, pork—especially cuts like the shoulder—are "tough and can take a beating." Turkey, not so much.

"You have to be very intentional with turkey; it requires finesse," Neal explains. "You not only have to make sure it doesn't dry out, but you also have to debone the whole thing. It's a very labor-intensive process."

Neal is a pit master in his own right, though he's taken an untraditional path to the food world. He began as a chemical engineer. A job offer took his family to Memphis, Tennessee, where he came to appreciate its distinctive ribs, but longed for North Carolina's peppery, vinegar-laden chopped pork.

This homesickness, coupled with the high stress of his job, led Neal to smoke meats on the weekend as a way to unwind. His wife began inviting new friends to their home, and Neal was more than happy to man the smoker as others socialized.

"My wife might have 50 people over one weekend, but as long as I was in my element and able to smell some hickory smoke, I was able to relax," Neal says.

Neal swapped recipes and techniques with colleagues in Memphis, and even competed in the Memphis in May world championship barbecue contest. But before long, North Carolina called his family home.

Once back in the Tar Heel state, Neal began re-exploring barbecue spots, which is how he encountered Roundtree, who was looking to close shop so that he could retire and travel. Neal began helping Roundtree run the business, but an unforeseen illness had Neal taking over. The rest, as they say, is history.

Neal has since interjected new life into Hickory Tree, with one dish in particular becoming signature: Crack-n-Cheese.

It came about by happenstance. Neal and his team were headed to Winston-Salem's Burke Street Food Truck Festival, and it was the first time they were selling macaroni and cheese. Just hours before the festival, he decided the recipe needed "more panache," so he wrote up the menu board for the day with something he called Crack-n-Cheese: a hearty cup of Neal's gooey macaroni and cheese, topped with a generous helping of smoked turkey, which is sprinkled with turkey skin cracklin's and finished with a drizzle of Hickory Tree's signature sweet and tangy barbecue sauce.

The dish has developed a cult following, and this year Neal is hoping to develop another version with more greenery, perhaps incorporating slaw or collards.

While Hickory Tree has its fair share of indulgent treats, the beauty of Neal's eatery is that it offers a little something for everyone.

"Growing up, having a meal meant it was time for family, friends, and fellowship," Neal says. "Everything in Hickory Tree is made with love. We do this work because we want to offer our community food that's different and food that's healthier; food they can only get here."

Tina Vasquez is a journalist originally from Los Angeles. She is currently based in Winston-Salem, where she is a full-time immigration reporter. In her spare time, she writes about food.

Getty Images

Personal Touches

Let your personalities shine through on wedding day

A wedding day is filled with symbolic tradition, from varied religious customs to the never-ending circle reflected in the exchanged rings. Even with all the traditional rituals to consider, nearly every bride and groom can find ways to give their special day some unique touches that reflect their personality and love.

The Music

From the prelude to the wedding to the dance music at the reception, music sets the mood. Whether you forgo traditional tunes or simply look for arrangements that give an updated twist to classics, let guests know this isn't your average wedding. To think outside the box, list some of your favorite recording artists, then choose their songs. For example, if you like Tim McGraw, consider his track "It's Your Love." Duets can be touching, such as the song "If I Ain't Got You" with Alicia Keys and Usher. Don't be afraid to be humorous—Johnny Cash's "I Walk the Line" or Stevie Wonder's "Signed, Sealed and Delivered" are fun choices.

The People

The wedding party is intended to be a collection of those nearest and dearest to the bride and groom. That being said, there's no reason this group must be limited to women on her side and guys on his. You don't even have to limit the group to just humans—a beloved pooch can make an adorable ring-bearer.

The Photos

For photography, think beyond the images you'll capture throughout the wedding and reception. Integrate photos of the two of you at various stages of life, together as a couple and with loved ones (perhaps even some you're honoring in memoriam). You can display these at a table with the guest book, as part of the table centerpieces, or on the gift table. Or take things digital and load your images into a slideshow set to music.

The Favors

Make favors meaningful. Forgo more common items like bubbles and chocolate, and instead send a little of yourself home with your guests. Perhaps you could give sets of colored pencils if you both are artistic. Or, choose a memento to represent the way you met, such as a bottle opener shaped like a bicycle to represent your fateful meeting on the greenway. If you both like to cook, consider giving food favors. For some quick ideas, visit elivingtoday.com and type in "edible favors."

The Food

Serve up a menu that shows guests more about your life together. Your loved ones can order basic beef or chicken anywhere. Make your main course the same food you enjoyed on your first date (gourmet pizza, anyone?) or during another monumental moment in your courtship.

—FamilyFeatures.com

Local shows

The Eastern Carolina Bridal Expo in Greenville is among events where you can get more ideas to make your day special. The expo is set for Sunday, Feb. 18, at the Greenville Convention Center. For more information, call 252-321-7671 or visit easterncarolinabridalexpo.com. For a list of wedding shows and fairs in the state, visit bit.ly/nc-weddingshows.

Material Matters

Know your options for kitchen design

For many homeowners, aesthetics and function are the primary considerations of a kitchen renovation. However, before you select colors and lay out your space, consider the durability of materials you will use.

Giving special attention to the material composition of your kitchen, particularly when it comes to the aspects that take the heaviest use—the floors, sink and countertops—can help ensure your renovation stands the test of time.

Flooring

Though often taken for granted, the floor is generally the kitchen feature that sustains the heaviest use in the long run. Tile is an excellent choice for the kitchen because it stands up well to heavy traffic and spills. However, tile can also be slippery and can be uncomfortable if you spend long amounts of time on your feet in the kitchen. Ceramic tile is the easiest to install but not as resistant to damage as porcelain or stone tile. The latter options require more skilled installation, and stone especially tends to be more expensive.

When it comes to wood, one of the first decisions is whether you prefer engineered or solid hardwood. Engineered versions tend to offer greater durability and flexibility in installation while the texture and appearance of solid hardwood are its strongest appeals. Other variables include the wood type, which further affects the look and strength. Oak is most common, but other traditional selections include maple and cherry and specialty woods like teak and bamboo. Plank width influences overall aesthetic, with slimmer boards lending a more modern look.

If you want something a little less traditional, an option like foot-friendly cork or a modern take on vinyl may be more to your liking.

Sink

Identifying the shape and size of the sink you need can help narrow down choices. Classic stainless steel is practical and versatile. While stainless steel's neutral color and sleek looks work with most kitchen styles, it's most often found in contemporary kitchens. Hot pans won't hurt it, and it's less likely than harder materials to damage delicate dishware that may slip from your grip.

If you're looking to make a statement, an enameled cast iron sink may be the answer. These sinks can withstand whatever your family dishes out. With a range of colors to choose from, you can go bold with deep hues or be subtle with pale tones.

Countertops

Natural stone like granite or quartz is hardy, but engineered options offer even greater resilience. Options like marble or limestone deliver beauty similar to natural stone but these softer materials require more care and caution.

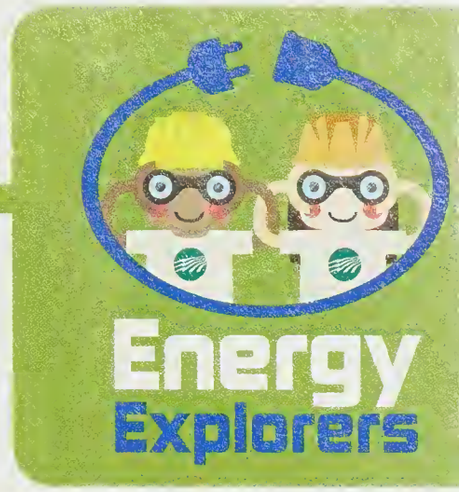
Concrete and wood are popular, stylish alternatives, but their susceptibility to stains and other imperfections may make them impractical for a busy family. For the budget conscious, there are ample, eye-catching options in laminate, which falls in the mid-range for durability.

—FamilyFeatures.com

Inspiration

Looking for more design ideas? Websites that provide photo galleries for kitchens and baths include digsdigs.com, kohler.com and pinterest.com.

Valentine's Day Word Search



Valentine's Day is Wednesday, February 14! Can you find the associated words in the puzzle below? Use the word bank to check your work.

Word Bank

- CANDY
- FLOWERS
- HUGS
- VALENTINES DAY
- CARD
- FRIEND
- LOVE
- CHOCOLATE
- HEART

T	Q	V	X	G	F	C	Y	F	C	J	U	E	Z	E
S	R	N	U	R	F	R	R	S	K	A	V	C	T	G
K	M	A	I	Z	W	Y	Q	E	E	O	R	L	U	F
Q	Z	E	E	U	V	R	S	S	L	M	M	D	O	L
P	N	H	A	H	R	C	M	O	I	C	X	J	A	O
D	W	C	Q	A	W	O	H	R	D	E	P	X	U	W
I	B	E	J	S	R	C	M	O	D	M	R	V	A	E
L	D	R	Z	D	U	V	K	P	C	O	J	M	M	R
M	B	M	O	L	X	Z	E	L	U	O	W	F	U	S
Q	Y	H	R	O	M	D	E	K	K	D	L	Z	O	D
H	U	G	S	J	Y	D	N	A	C	E	Y	A	P	O
J	G	D	Q	W	M	K	J	P	T	P	D	K	T	F
V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E	S	D	A	Y	U	E
E	T	J	Z	V	L	R	M	K	R	D	S	Y	N	M
F	H	K	H	P	Q	X	Q	K	A	V	U	I	I	R

For answers: carolinacountry.com/februarywordsearch

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Karen Glson Houre

Sweet Solutions

Easy ways to cut back on sugar

It's common knowledge that eating too much sugar isn't healthy. Fortunately, minimizing the processed sugar is your diet doesn't have to mean you can't enjoy treats for Valentine's Day or always skip dessert. A key element to successfully changing food habits is balance and moderation.

Before getting started, it's important to remember that many healthy foods naturally contain sugar, a carbohydrate your body burns for energy. Processed sugars are different, adding calories that provide no other nutritional benefit. At excessive levels, they disrupt your metabolism, and can pose serious health risks.

The USDA's dietary guidelines recommend that added sugar account for less than ten percent of your daily calories. That means a maximum of 50 grams a day for women and 62.5 grams for men. To keep your sugar consumption in the healthy range, Courtney McCormick, corporate dietitian at Nutrisystem, offers these tips:

1 Hold the ketchup. Just one tablespoon of ketchup can have four grams of sugar. Salsa, barbecue sauce, spaghetti sauce and even bread are also hidden sources of sugar.

2 Sweeten with spices. Replace sugar from coffee, hot cereal and other foods with spices that have a naturally sweet taste, such as vanilla, cinnamon and cardamom.

3 Start with plain. The fruit in the bottom of your yogurt can come with 25 or more grams of added sugar. Buy plain yogurt and add fresh or dried fruit.

4 Flavor your water. A 12-ounce can of soda has as much as 40 grams of added sugar. Skip it and drink water sweetened with fresh fruit and herbs, such as strawberries and basil, or lime and mint.

5 Snack on fruit. One cup of blueberries, for example, has seven grams of natural sugar to satisfy your sweet tooth. Its fiber helps you feel full and slows the breakdown of the sugars, so you don't crave more calories soon after eating.

6 Eat right and often. When you're hungry, you crave calories and that too often leads to sugary snacking. Reduce between-meal munching by eating healthy, filling foods four to six times a day.

7 Bake with applesauce. Eating fewer baked goods can reduce your sugar intake, but if you need to make a cake, replace a third of the sugar in the recipe with an equal amount of unsweetened applesauce.

Here is a delicious, no-sugar added recipe to try. It makes a great snack or side dish. C

—StatePoint

Slow Cooker Applesauce

Recipe courtesy of Nutrisystem

- 12 medium red apples
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 teaspoon raw, unfiltered, organic apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

Remove the cores from your apples (Gala, McIntosh and Honeycrisp are good, naturally sweet options), then slice them in quarters (do not peel). Add all ingredients to your slow cooker. Stir so the apple chunks are coated in the cinnamon, nutmeg and apple cider vinegar.

Cook on low 3 to 3½ hours. About two hours in, break up chunks a bit with a large spoon.

Yield: 14 servings (each ½ cup)

Editor's note: Depending on your cooker, you may need to cook your applesauce closer to four hours. Add salt to taste.

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Item 42304 shown

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SOLAR ROPE LIGHT

- Great outdoor accent lighting
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6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINE

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1750 PSI ELECTRIC PRESSURE WASHER

Customer Rating ★★★★½

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

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Tar Heel Tidbits

For the young (and young at heart)

Pull-Apart Sausage Rolls

This simple recipe is perfect for a wintry morning, and kids enjoy creating the dimples in the rolls. For more recipes, visit smithfield.com.

- 1 pound sausage
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped rosemary leaves, plus sprigs for garnish
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon water
- 2 cans (12 ounces each) refrigerated small biscuits (20 biscuits total)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a bowl, mix the sausage with the rosemary and pepper. Divide it into 20 pieces, rolling into little balls, then refrigerate them until needed.

In a small bowl, whisk egg and water until frothy. Remove biscuits from packaging and dimple each biscuit's center using your thumb. Insert sausage balls in centers and place biscuits close together on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Brush exposed biscuit dough with egg wash and top with rosemary sprigs. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until biscuits are golden and sausage is thoroughly cooked through. Serve warm.

Food safety note: Use a meat thermometer to check the sausage once the rolls are removed from the oven. For beef and pork sausage, the internal temperature should be at least 160 degrees.

Yield: 20 biscuits

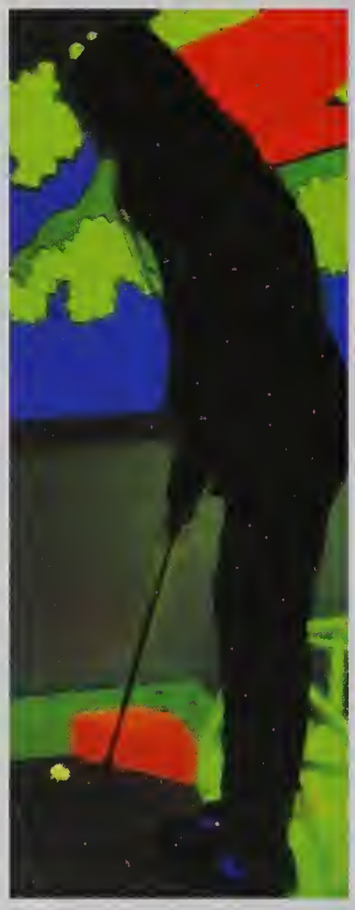
A GOOD READ

Jada Jones: Class Act

Smart, big-hearted Jada wants to run for student council. But when rumors fly about her secret fear of public speaking, she isn't sure who she can trust. Could winning votes mean losing friends?

This chapter book helps young readers, especially those ages 6–8, understand relatable issues found at school. Its two-color art helps readers ease from four-color art into black-and-white books. "Jada Jones: Class Act" is written by Kelly Starling Lyons, who lives in Raleigh, and illustrated by Vanessa Brantley Newton. Published by Penguin Workshop, 90 pages. Softcover and e-book, $5.99 at target.com.

Get Your Glow on



A trend for amusements puts a colorful twist on traditional miniature golf by adding black lights for glow-in-the-dark play. The sites are indoors and can operate year-round, regardless of the weather.

Opry Glowgolf, located inside Independence Mall in Wilmington, is one such site. Kids and adults alike get a kick out of its boldly illuminated, ocean-themed courses. General admission covers the cost of unlimited play for the day, and is $8; kids age 5 and under, military and handicap are $6.

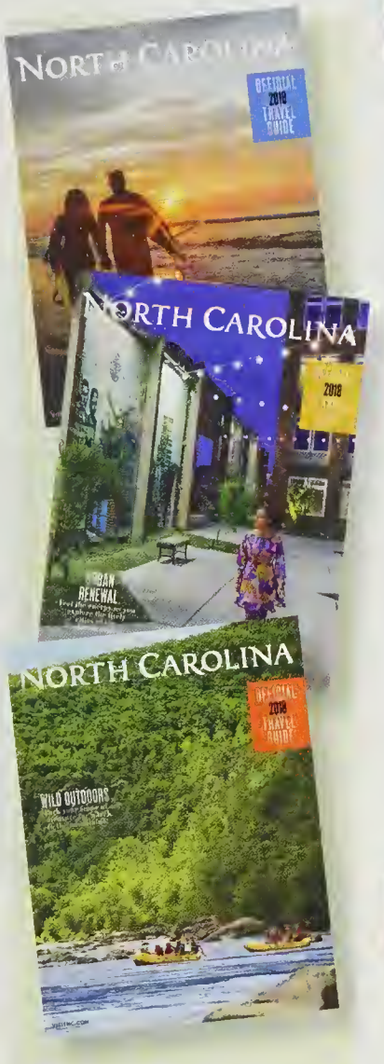
Its Laser Maze Challenge is priced separately: one game, $3; two games, $5; five games, $10. For more information, call 910-791-8740 or visit opryglowgolf.com/lo_wilmington.htm. Other black light amusement centers in NC include Purple Planet 3-D Mini Golf in Belmont (704-829-6455 or purpleplanetminigolf.com) and Pirate Black Light Golf in Fayetteville (910-864-1638 or pirateblacklightgolf.com).

Have a laugh!

Q: What did the Valentine's Day card say to the stamp?

A: Stick with me, and we'll go places!

Jackson County TDA



Free Guide to Adventure

NC's new 2018 travel guide is jam-packed with ideas for future adventures! It offers comprehensive directories for lodging and attractions, and new features include an "Incredible Eats" section. There are also three covers to choose from, reflecting images of either the mountains, piedmont or coast.

You can order the print version, or download the guide, at visitnc.com/free-travel-publications. Or, call 800-847-4862 (800-VISITNC) to get the 172-page print version mailed to you. The digital version provides information pop-ups, a social media share feature, search functions and clickable URLs.

Games of Thrones

Wacky outhouse races are a real gas

Imagine watching people dressed in crazy outfits, perched on toilet seats in decorated outhouses. Then picture them racing down ski slopes while attempting to stay upright.

Every winter, Sapphire Valley Resort in Jackson County hosts the Great Outhouse Races. Past outhouse themes include "Who Cut the Cheese" and "Redneck Wishing Well."

Jackson County TDA

Jackson County TD

In case you aren't privy to the rules, participants make their runs with toilet paper (or alternative wiping resource) at hand and their seats have at least one hole. Team members push the outhouse, while a fellow team member sits inside. Their goal is to flush the competition, but in some cases, it's enough to just finish.

The 2018 races are set for Saturday, February 17. Admission is free for spectators. For more information, call 828-743-7663 or visit skisapphirevalley.com/great-outhouse-races.html.

carolinacountry.com/extras
Check out a video from past Great Outhouse Races.

A Puzzle with a Past

A new jigsaw puzzle combines hands-on fun with learning by highlighting more than 50 NC landmarks. The 550-piece puzzle features aspects of agriculture, wildlife, arts, literature, architecture, history, business and sports.

The 18" by 24" puzzle originally began as a mural designed by artistic residents at Carolina Meadows, a retirement home in Chapel Hill. The residents created it as a way to help UNC-TV, a statewide public media network, raise money during fundraising. Heritage Puzzle, based in Winston-Salem, remade it as a puzzle and is contributing some profits from the puzzle's sales to UNC-TV. The mural artists are donating their royalties as well.

"All Things North Carolina" sells for $16.95 online at heritagepuzzle.com and is available at select retail locations. Call 888-348-3717 for stores near you.

I Remember

Memories and photos from our readers

Harold & Annie Herring celebrated 70 years of marriage with renewal vows, despite Hurricane Matthew.

Weathering 70 Years of Marriage

On October 18, 1946, Harold Herring and Annie Sutton were married. They were only able to have one child, and I married him. When our daughter married in 2013, my mother-in-law said, "When Harold and I celebrate our 70th anniversary, I'd sure like to wear that wedding dress. My sweet daddy was a sharecropper and he couldn't afford that in 1946."

That's how I started in making Mom's dream come true. I booked their church, found a lady to make a seven-layer wedding cake (a layer for each decade), and things looked good. Until, that is...the Saturday before the wedding. Hurricane Matthew decided to tear through Wayne, Lenoir and other inland counties.

The Neuse River rose to a record height, electricity was expected to be out for seven to 10 days, and we were declared a national disaster area. The cake lady called in panic, the church had no electricity, and the flower man told me the mums were stuck "across the river."

Needless to say, we did a lot of praying. However, thanks to the dedicated and incredibly hardworking electric co-op crews, the electricity came back in record time, the cake got made, the flowers arrived and Mom and Dad re-married at 88 and 89 years of age. About 400 people made it, with about 400 who couldn't...but it was one grand miracle.

Bev Herring, LaGrange, a member of Tri-County EMC

Send Us Your Memories We love sharing photos and memories dear to our readers. Submit your photo, plus roughly 200 words that describe it, online or by mail with a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want it returned (only one entry per household, per month). Include your name, mailing address, phone number or email address, and the name of your electric co-op. We retain reprint rights, and we'll pay $50 for those we publish. **Online:** carolinacountry.com/contact **U.S. Mail:** I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616

Ann Williamson and her daughter Connie both wore the wedding dress made by Ann's mother.

A Wedding Dress and Precious Memories

My parents were sharecroppers for 29 years. To supplement their income, Mama sold eggs and homemade butter, and she cared for children.

I met the love of my life and planned to be married in June 1969. Mama could not afford to buy me a wedding dress, so she told me to pick out a picture of a wedding dress in the J.C. Penney catalogue and she would make one for me.

I picked out just the perfect dress, and Mama found and purchased the fabric and lace to make one for me. Not only did she make my beautiful bride's dress, but she also made dresses for five bridesmaids and a flower girl! She was quite a seamstress.

Mama died in November 2013 at the age of 88. As I was going through her things I found my wedding dress, preserved nicely and neatly in a box. I had no idea that she had saved it!

This was just like my Mama still giving to me even though she was gone. What a treasure: what a Mom!

Needless to say, I could not begin to fit into the dress, but it was a perfect fit for my daughter, Connie. What a feeling that came over me when I saw her in that special dress. Mama took so much pride in her work. She had used tiny hand stitching and covered all those buttons by hand. All this was done with love.

My dress was just as beautiful on my daughter as it was the day I wore it in my wedding. Thank you, Mama.

Ann Williamson, Chadbourn
A member of Brunswick Electric

Advertisement

Eliminate Belly Fat with Vinegar!

Find Out How...

by James Victor

If you want to lose weight and keep it off -- hate dieting and are tired of taking pills, buying costly diet foods or gimmick "fast loss" plans that don't work-- *you'll love the easy Vinegar way to lose all the pounds you want to lose. And keep them off!*

Today, the natural Vinegar weight loss plan is a reality after years of research by noted vinegar authority Emily Thacker. Her just published book "Emily's Vinegar Diet Book" will help you attain your ideal weight the healthiest and most enjoyable way ever.

You'll never again have to count calories. Or go hungry. Or go to expensive diet salons. Or buy pills, drugs.

If you like food and hate dieting, you'll love losing weight the Vinegar way.

Suddenly your body will be energized with new vigor and zest as you combine nature's most powerful, nutritional foods with vinegar to trim away pounds and look years younger.

You'll feel and look years younger shedding unhealthy pounds that make one look older than their age.

In fact, the book's program is so complete that it also helps you:

- Learn secrets of ageless beauty and glowing skin
- Help build the immune system, to fight arthritis and disease
- Speed the metabolism to use natural thermogenesis to burn fat

PLUS so much more that you simply must use the book's easy Vinegar way to lose all the weight you want to lose-- and enjoy all its other benefits-- before deciding if you want to keep it.

TO ORDER A COPY

of ***Emily's Vinegar Diet Book*** see Savings Coupon with Free Gift Offer

Hydrogen Peroxide Can Heal WHAT?

by James Victor

Hydrogen peroxide is trusted by every hospital and emergency room in the country for its ability to kill deadly germs like E. coli and the swine flu virus. In fact, it has attracted so much interest from doctors that over 6000 articles about it have appeared in scientific publications around the world.

Research has discovered that hydrogen peroxide enables your immune system to function properly and fight infection and disease. Doctors have found it can shrink tumors and treat **allergies, Alzheimer's, asthma, clogged arteries, diabetes, digestive problems and migraines**.

Smart consumers nationwide are also discovering there are hundreds of health cures and home remedy uses for hydrogen peroxide. A new book called *The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide* is now available that tells you exactly how to use hydrogen peroxide by itself... and mixed with simple everyday kitchen items... to make liniments, rubs, lotions, soaks and tonics that treat a wide variety of ailments.

It contains tested and proven health cures that do everything from relieving **chronic pain** to making **age spots** go away. You'll be amazed to see how a little hydrogen peroxide mixed with ordinary kitchen items can: **• Relieve arthritis, rheumatism & fibromyalgia • Treat athlete's foot, foot and nail fungus • Clear up allergies and sinus problems • Soothe sore throats, fight colds and flu • Help heal boils and skin infections • Whiten teeth without spending a fortune • Destroy dental bacteria and heal gingivitis • Help heal cold sores, canker sores • Relieve insect bites and stings • Soothe sore feet, soothe muscle aches • Help minor wounds and cuts heal faster • Clear up acne, rashes and yeast infections**

The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide also shows you how to make money saving household cleaners that:

• Kill germs on kitchen surfaces and utensils • Make a powerful scouring powder that works wonders on sinks, refrigerators and ovens • Disinfect coffee makers, tea pots and blenders • Sanitize wood cutting boards and spoons • Make wood floors, grout and linoleum gleam • Kill bacteria on fruits, vegetables and meats • Clean toilets, tubs, showers • Clean and disinfect pet stains • Remove mold and mildew • Remove wine, ink and blood stains • Boost laundry detergents • Clean windows & mirrors • Rid pets of parasites • Make plants flourish

TO ORDER A COPY

of ***The Magic of Hydrogen Peroxide*** see Savings Coupon with Free Gift Offer

Vinegar is like a Drugstore in a Bottle

by James Victor

Thousands of years ago ancient healers trusted apple cider vinegar, and modern research shows - *vinegar truly is a wonder cure!*

From the Bible to Cleopatra to the fierce Samurai warriors of Japan, vinegar has been documented as a powerful tonic to ensure strength, power and long life.

You'll get easy recipes that mix vinegar with other common household items to help:

- Calm an upset stomach
- Ease leg cramps
- Soothe sprained muscles
- Control appetite to lose weight
- Relieve coughs
- Banish nausea
- Arthritis pain
- Make hiccups disappear
- Cool a sunburn
- Boost memory
- Reduce sore throat pain
- Relieve itchy skin
- Lower blood pressure & cholesterol
- Eliminate bladder infections
- Chase away a cold
- Treat burns
- Reduce infection
- Aid digestion
- Improve memory
- Soothe sore feet
- Treat blemishes & age spots
- Remove corns & calluses
- Replace many household cleaners

And that's just the beginning of the over 1000 new and improved hints and tips that you'll get.

Strep and Staph infections? Vinegar is a powerful antiseptic and kills even these dangerous bacteria on contact.

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Feel good and look good with these hair and skin-friendly vinegar remedies.

You'll learn when you should *and should not* use vinegar.

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TO ORDER A COPY

of the ***Vinegar Anniversary Book*** see Savings Coupon with Free Gift Offer

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February events

Wedding Expo
Feb. 17, Burnsville

MOUNTAINS

Zach Williams & Citizen Way
Christian-pop-rock music
Feb. 3, Franklin
866-273-4615
greatmountainmusic.com

The Diamonds
Feb. 10, Franklin
866-273-4615
greatmountainmusic.com

Love, Guy
Collection of love songs
Feb. 15–18, Hendersonville
828-693-0731
flatrockplayhouse.org

Laura Story
Christian music
Feb. 16, Franklin
866-273-4615
greatmountainmusic.com

Wedding Expo
Caterers, DJs, florists
Feb. 17, Burnsville
828-682-7209
burnsvilletowncenter.com

Ancient Art of Chair Caning
Demos by Brandy Clements
Feb. 16–18, Asheville
828-253-7651
grovewood.com

Hanji Flower Lamp Techniques
Demos by Pamella O'Connor
Feb. 17–18, Asheville
828-253-7651
grovewood.com

Totally '80s Retro Ski Weekend
Contests, bands
Feb. 22–25, Beech Mountain
800-468-5506
beechmtn.com

Business of Farming Conference
Workshops, networking
Feb. 24, Asheville
828-236-1282
asapconnections.org

ONGOING

It's All About the Story
Works by Nancy Peacock
Feb. 19–Mar. 25, Hillsborough
919-732-5001
hillsboroughgallery.com

PIEDMONT

The Marquis Slam
Poets compete
Feb. 3, Fayetteville
910-483-5311
facebook.com/TheMarquisSlam

1867–2017: A 150 Year Celebration Concert
Feb. 10, Fayetteville
910-433-4690
fayettevillesymphony.org

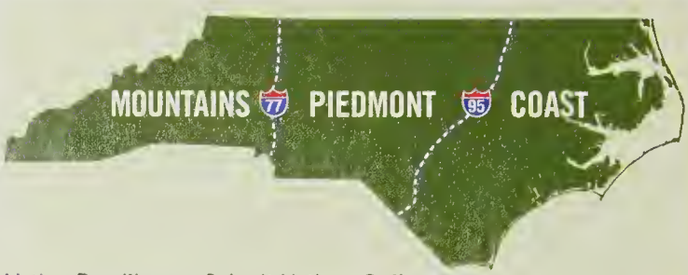
An Evening with Brian McKnight
R&B singer-songwriter
Feb. 10, Fayetteville
910-438-4100
crowncomplexnc.com

Hunting Heritage Banquet
NWTP fundraiser
Feb. 10, Wingate
704-201-7750
ritanrichard@windstream.net

Monster Truck Tour
Feb. 16–17, Fayetteville
910-438-4100
crowncomplexnc.com

Karen Peck & New River, The Isaacs
Relay for Life benefit concert
Feb. 24, Albemarle
704-986-3666
stanlyciviccenter.com

carolinacountry.com/calendar
See more events online with photos, descriptions, maps and directions.



Listing Deadlines:
For Apr.: Feb. 25
For May: March 25

Submit Listings Online:
carolinacountry.com/calendar
(No email or U.S. Mail.)

There are more than 250 farmers markets in North Carolina, and some stay open year-round. For one near you, visit bit.ly/NCfarmmarkets.

Where in Carolina Country is this?

Send your answer by Tuesday, February 6, with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

Online: carolinacountry.com/where

By mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

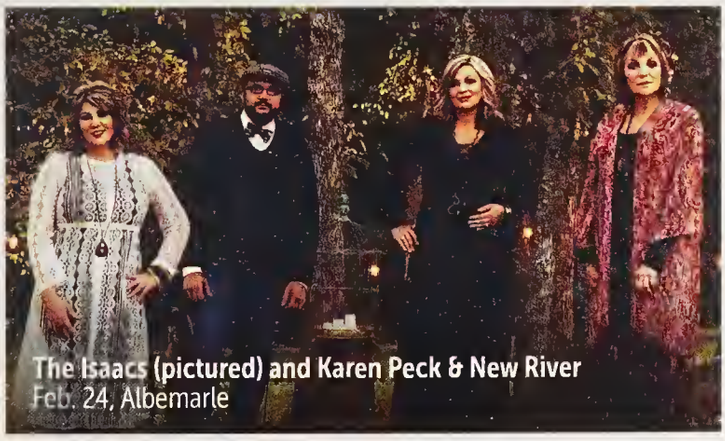
Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our March issue, will receive $25.

Have a roadside gem you'd like to share? Submit a photo, plus a brief description and general location information, at carolinacountry.com/where.

January winner

The January Where Is This photo from Tideland EMC member Bill Clopton features the Captain Cecil fishing boat anchored near Garland Fulcher Seafood along Racoon Creek in Oriental. Many readers commented that they have similar photos of the docks. More than 150 readers correctly identified the town these docks are located in, while more than 100 readers picked other similar fishing docks up and down the North Carolina coast: from Calabash, Holden Beach, Southport, Shallotte, Varnamtown and Wilmington near the southern border, mid-coast towns of Morehead City, Beaufort, Salter Path and Sneads Ferry, to Englehard, Hobucken, Swanquarter and Wanchese north of Oriental. We even received an entry for Sneel Fair, New Jersey. The winning entry chosen at random from all the correct submissions came from Kevin Holden of Supply, a Brunswick EMC member.



Christie Dashiell
African American Music Series
Feb. 9, Greenville
252-551-6947
pittcountyarts.org

Bridal Expo
Local, national vendors
Feb. 18, Greenville
252-321-7671
easterncarolinabridalexpo.com

Mom Prom: "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun"
Dinner, '80s music
Feb. 24, Greenville
252-551-6947
pittcountyarts.org

ONGOING

Hands on a Hardbody
Musical about truck contest
Feb. 15–20, Greenville
1-800-ECU-ARTS
calendar.ecu.edu

ONGOING

Seussical
Dr. Seuss-inspired musical
Feb. 1–25, Fayetteville
910-323-4233
cfrt.org

Chagall: The Story of Exodus
Famed artist's lithographs
Feb. 8–April 21, Fayetteville
910-425-5379
davidmccunegallery.org

Know Before You Go
In case something changes after Carolina Country goes to press, check information from the contact listed.

COAST

Quebe Sisters
Western swing, country
Feb. 1, Washington
252-947-2076
gobcca.org

Eastern Carolina Resources Fair
Repurposed items, competitions
Feb. 2–4, Greenville
252-355-1039
unnaturalresources.org

Carrie Newcomer
Folk musician
Feb. 8, Oriental
252-617-2125
pamlicomusic.org

Buckquarter Creek Trail, Durham

Four Great Winter Hikes

Get trekking off-peak for solitude and cool views

It may be chilly outside, but there's no need to go into hibernation from hiking. Many trails in NC are stunning in the winter and offer more dramatic views, snowy wonderlands and quiet solitude. Here are four trails worth bundling up for.

1 Morrow Mountain Trail, Albemarle

ncparks.gov/morrow-mountain-state-park | 704-982-4402

With the exception of a strenuously steep section, this is a moderate-to-easy trek along rolling hills. The trail boasts panoramic views, and you'll feel extra tall when you spy glimmering Lake Tillery and buildings in Charlotte far away. The 5.2 miles round trip utilizes three other trails—Laurel, Sugarloaf Mountain and Mountain Loop. The park lies in the ancient Uwharrie Mountains. Access Morrow Mountain Trail from either the park office or the parking lot atop Morrow Mountain.

2 Buckquarter Creek Trail, Durham

ncparks.gov/eno-river-state-park | 919-383-1686

Located at Eno River State Park, this trail is a waters-edge treasure that affords excellent views of spectacular rock boulders. It's a moderate, 1.5-mile round trip hike, except for some steep stairs. (Want to walk further? Access Holden's Mill Trail at a wooden footbridge on Buckquarter Creek Trail. Its easy loop adds 2.6 miles and includes additional river views and the stone remains of an old mill.) The park has five different access areas in Orange and Durham counties. Buckquarter Creek Trail is easily accessed from the Piper-Cox House parking lot at 6101 Cole Mill Road, Durham.

3 Neusiok Trail, Havelock

bit.ly/usda-neusiok | 252-638-5628

Ambitious hikers dig the diversity of this 20-mile plus, one way trail, described as easy-to-moderate. It's in the Croatan National Forest and travels through cypress swamps, savannahs, bogs and hardwoods, with expansive, riverfront views. Keep your eyes peeled for bald eagles, otters, wild turkey and deer. You'll stroll on some boardwalks but still may get your boots wet. It's an ideal winter backpacking trip—no mosquitoes and three sleeping shelters en route. Park at The Oyster Point trailhead on the Newport River or the Pine Cliff picnic area trailhead on the Neuse River. (It's possible to do shorter hikes, too. Many roads cross the trail.)

4 Rock Garden Trail, Danbury

ncparks.gov/hanging-rock-state-park | 336-593-8480

This paved trail at Hanging Rock State Park is short but sweet (a mere 0.2 miles, roundtrip)—perfect for those who can't walk far or who use wheelchairs. It goes to a beautiful rock outcropping, with a bench for peaceful reflection along the way. Park at the far left end of the Visitors Center parking lot for easiest access. There's also an ADA accessible picnic shelter and ADA fishing pier at the park's lake.

Be prepared

Check the weather the day you head out, and let a family member or friend know where you are going, who you are with, and when you plan to return. Check with parks about conditions, especially in regard to snow and ice.

Beat the cold with layers of clothing, warm gloves and a hat. The Appalachian Mountain Club offers a comprehensive winter gear guide on its website (bit.ly/outdoors-wintergear).

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Cooking with Venison

A hearty, simple and delicious beef alternative

By Mike Zlotnicki

Thomas Harvey

I suppose everyone has a meal or dish that evokes childhood memories. The aroma wafting from a kitchen today can take one back in the blink of an eye. One dish for me is beef stroganoff. From its origins in mid-19th-century Russia, it has become popular around the world, with variations from Scandinavia to Japan to Brazil.

Being a deer hunter, I've adapted this dish to use venison. My version is based on an old Paula Deen recipe—so simple a man could make it, but delicious. You can use backstrap if you like, but I use one of the roasts gleaned from boning out a ham and cutting it into strips. The ingredients are packaged and sold in the correct amounts, like the 8 ounces of mushrooms, the broth and soup, which makes it easy to shop for and prepare.

Why venison?

Most beef is high in saturated fat. Venison is not. For example, four ounces of beef flank steak can have 9 grams of total fat with 4 grams of saturated fat. An equivalent serving of venison will have about 3 grams of fat with 1 gram of saturated fat. Venison has more vitamins and minerals per serving than beef, and is particularly high in iron, vitamin B6, niacin and riboflavin.

The one thing venison does NOT have over beef is cost. A 2006 survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that deer hunters spend about $885 annually on equipment and trips. So, I choose not to calculate what my venison actually costs per pound. Instead, I choose to revel in my time afield, and (if blessed with a harvest) appreciate the original "free range," "hormone free" meat available to hunters here in the Tar Heel state.

Mike Zlotnicki is associate editor at Wildlife in North Carolina magazine. He lives in Garner with his wife, three daughters and two German shorthaired pointers.

Easy Venison Stroganoff

- 1½–2 pounds of venison, cut into strips (round or sirloin steak will work for the non-hunters)
- All-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 medium to large yellow onion, sliced
- 1 (10.75-ounce) can of cream of mushroom soup (I like low-sodium.)
- 1 (10.75-ounce) can of beef broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup sour cream
- Cooked egg noodles
- Parsley for garnish, if desired

Season the venison strips with salt and pepper, then dredge in flour. In a deep skillet, quickly brown the strips in olive oil and butter. Remove the venison when browned.

Add mushrooms and sliced onion to the pan. Sauté until the onion is tender. Sprinkle with one tablespoon of flour.

Return the venison to the pan with mushrooms and onion. Add cream of mushroom soup and beef broth.

Cover and cook over low heat for about 30 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Stir in the sour cream just before serving over the egg noodles and garnish with chopped parsley.

NC WILDLIFE UPDATE

Spotted Seatrout Closure

The NC Division of Marine Fisheries closed all coastal and joint waters to commercial and recreational spotted seatrout harvest on January 5 due to widespread cold stun events.

Cold stuns are natural events that occur when there is a sudden drop in water temperature or prolonged periods of cold weather that makes the fish sluggish. Many fish will die from the cold. Others fall prey to birds and other predators. Studies suggest that cold stun events can have a significant impact on spotted seatrout populations, and the division

has confirmed significant spotted seatrout cold stun events in six water bodies from Surf City to Manteo.

If a significant cold stun event occurs, the division will close all spotted seatrout harvests until the spring—the NC Wildlife Resources Commission automatically closes spotted seatrout season in inland waters when it closes in adjacent coastal waters.

The intent of the closure is to allow the fish that survive the cold stun event the chance to spawn in the spring before harvest reopens. Peak spawning occurs in May. The spotted seatrout season will remain closed until June 15, when it will reopen by proclamation.

More specifics about the closure are available online from the Division of Marine Fisheries (bit.ly/seatrout-closure).

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Elevators have been around since the mid 19th century, and you can find them in almost every multi-story structure around… except homes. That's because installing an elevator in a home has always been a complicated and expensive home renovation project… until now.

Innovative designers have created a home elevator that can be easily installed almost anywhere in your home by our professional team without an expensive shaft-way. Its small "footprint" and self-contained lift mechanism adds convenience and value to your home and quality to your life. It's called the Easy Climber® Elevator. Call us now and we can tell you just how simple it is to own.

For many people, particularly seniors, climbing stairs can be a struggle and a health threat. Some have installed motorized stair lifts, but they block access to the stairs and are hardly an enhancement to your home's décor. By contrast, the Easy Climber® Elevator can be installed almost anywhere in your home. That way you can move easily and safely from floor to floor without struggling or worse yet… falling.

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Stan W. US war veteran and retired professor

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Understanding the Value of Radiant Barriers

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

A radiant barrier reflects radiant heat and can be used to keep heat in a home during the winter and to keep heat out in the summer. In order to understand the value of a radiant barrier, we need to consider the three different ways heat travels.

Convection is air movement from hot to cold. This happens through openings in your home, like doors, windows, vents and air leaks.

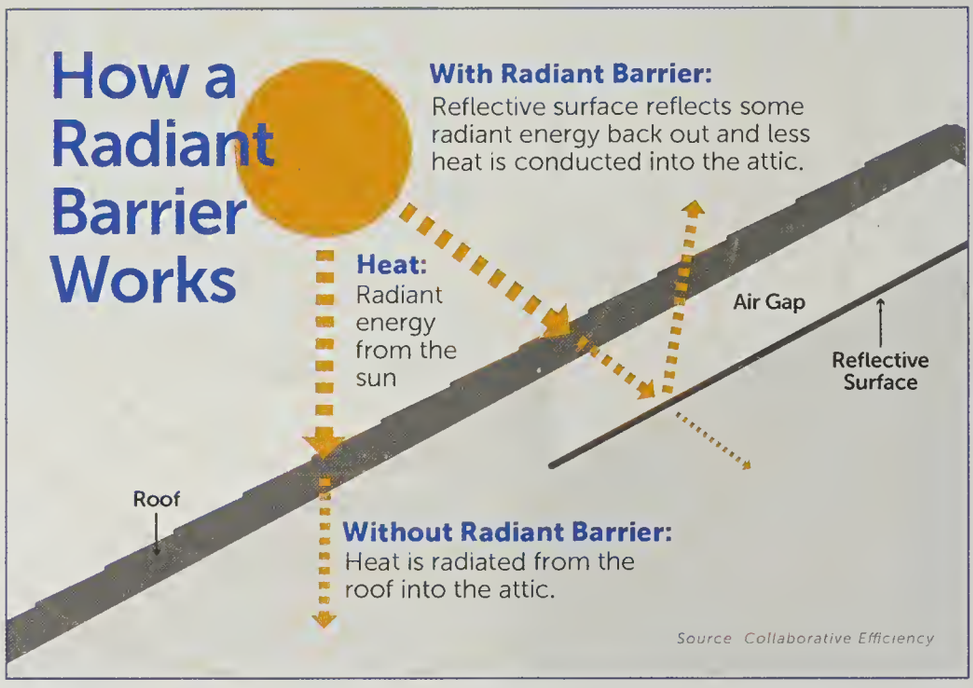
Conduction is heat traveling through a solid material, such as the sheetrock and framing of your home. This can be minimized by insulation.

Radiant heat loss is a transfer of heat from the sun, or when a warmer material transmits infrared radiation to a colder material. Radiant barriers are designed to reflect this type of heat loss.

Radiant barriers often look like aluminum foil. Sometimes the foil is fastened to oriented strand board or foam board, but the foil will only reflect radiant heat toward an air space of at least one inch. If the foil is in contact with a solid material, it conducts excess heat into that material.

A common location for application of radiant barriers is the attic; radiant energy from the sun is sent back out of the roof before it can heat the air and insulation in your home. It is commonly sold as a roll of shiny, aluminum material and is usually mounted on the underside of the framing that supports the roof.

Radiant barriers often look like aluminum foil.


How a Radiant Barrier Works
With Radiant Barrier:
Reflective surface reflects some radiant energy back out and less heat is conducted into the attic.
Heat:
Radiant energy from the sun
Air Gap
Reflective Surface
Roof
Without Radiant Barrier:
Heat is radiated from the roof into the attic.
Source Collaborative Efficiency

The radiant barrier is only effective in reflecting radiant heat, not as insulation or as a wrap to block air loss, but it can be very effective at its intended purpose. Even something as thin as a sheet of aluminum foil can reflect 95 percent of the radiated heat back through the roof if it's installed properly, with an air gap between itself and the roof. While other solutions such as an attic fan try to remove the heat once it has accumulated, the radiant barrier stops the heat from building up in the first place.

The net impact of a radiant barrier depends on whether you live in a hot or cold-weather climate. For example, homes that were retrofitted with attic radiant barrier systems in Florida were able to reduce air conditioning energy use by about 9 percent. In colder climates, the radiant barrier that reflects unwanted heat outside of the house in the summer will also be reflecting heat away from the house in the winter. In other words, the cooling bill may decrease but the heating bill may increase.

So, is a radiant barrier in your attic a good investment? Sometimes. You need to do a little research, as savings vary in each situation and there are many inaccurate claims made about the cost savings they bring. In a warmer climate, a home with a large cooling load and a roof that is fully exposed to the sun, an attic radiant barrier could be a cost-effective measure, and it could make your home more comfortable. Products are getting better all the time, but even then, your expectations need to be realistic. It's a good idea to compare an investment in an attic radiant barrier to other energy efficiency investments, such as improving your attic insulation or sealing air leaks around doors and windows. Of course, the best way to compare your energy efficiency opportunities is to schedule an energy audit of your home. Start by talking to energy advisors at your local electric cooperative.

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. Visit carolinacountry.com/your-energy for more ideas on energy efficiency.

ADVERTISEMENT

Drug Companies Fear Release of the New AloeCure

Big Pharma stands to lose billions as doctors' recommend drug-free "health cocktail" that adjusts and corrects your body's health conditions.

by David Waxman
Seattle Washington:

Drug company execs are nervous. That's because the greatest health advance in decades has hit the streets. And analysts expect it to put a huge crimp in "Big Pharma" profits.

So what's all the fuss about? It's about a new ingredient that's changing the lives of people who use it. Some call it "the greatest discovery since penicillin"!

The name of the product is the AloeCure. It's not a drug. It's something completely different. And the product is available to anyone who wants it, at a reasonable price. But demands may force future prices to rise.

TOP DOC WARNS: DIGESTION DRUGS CAN CRIPPLE YOU!

Company spokesperson, Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist recommends AloeCure before she decides to prescribe any digestion drug. Especially after the FDA's stern warning about long-term use of drugs classified as proton pump inhibitors like **Prilosec®, Nexium®, and Prevacid®**. In a nutshell, the FDA statement warned people should avoid taking these digestion drugs for longer than three 14-day treatment periods because there is an increased risk of bone fractures. Many people take them daily and for decades.

Dr. Leal should know. Many patients come to her with bone and joint complaints and she does everything she can to help them. One way for digestion sufferers to help avoid possible risk of tragic joint and bone problems caused by overuse of digestion drugs is to take the AloeCure.

Analysts expect the AloeCure to put a huge crimp in "Big Pharma" profits.

The secret to AloeCure's "health adjusting" formula is scientifically tested Acemannan, a polysaccharide extracted from Aloe Vera. But not the same aloe vera that mom used to apply to your cuts, scrapes and burns. This is a perfect strain of aloe that is organically grown under very strict conditions. AloeCure is so powerful it begins to benefit your health the instant you take it. It soothes intestinal discomfort and you can avoid the possibility of bone and health damage caused by overuse of digestion drugs. We all know how well aloe works externally on cuts, scrapes and burns. But did you know Acemannan has many of other health benefits?...

HELPS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM TO CALM INFLAMMATION

According to a leading aloe research, when correctly processed for digesting, the Aloe plant has a powerful component for regulating your immune system called Acemannan. So whether it's damage that is physical, bacterial, chemical or autoimmune; the natural plant helps the body stay healthy.

RAPID ACID AND HEARTBURN NEUTRALIZER

Aloe has proved to have an astonishing effect on users who suffer with digestion problems like bouts of acid reflux, heartburn, cramping, gas and constipation because it acts as a natural acid buffer and soothes the digestive system. But new studies prove it does a whole lot more.

SIDE-STEP HEART CONCERNS

So you've been taking proton pump inhibitors (PPI's) for years and you feel just fine. In June of 2015 a major study shows that chronic PPI use increases the risk of heart attack in general population.

UNLEASH YOUR MEMORY

Studies show that your brain needs the healthy bacteria from your gut in order function at its best. Both low and high dosages of digestion drugs are proven to destroy that healthy bacteria and get in the way of brain function. So you're left with a sluggish, slow-to-react brain without a lot of room to store information. The acemannan used in AloeCure actually makes your gut healthier, so healthy bacteria flows freely to your brain so you think better, faster and with a larger capacity for memory.

Doctors call it "The greatest health discovery in decades!"

SLEEP LIKE A BABY

A night without sleep really damages your body. And continued lost sleep can lead to all sorts of health problems. But what you may not realize is the reason why you're not sleeping. Some call it "Ghost Reflux". A low-intensity form of acid reflux discomfort that quietly keeps you awake in the background. AloeCure helps digestion so you may find yourself sleeping through the night.

CELEBRITY HAIR, SKIN & NAILS

Certain antacids may greatly reduce your body's ability to break down and absorb calcium. Aloe delivers calcium as it aids in balancing your stomach acidity. The result? Thicker, healthier looking hair...more youthful looking skin... And nails so strong they may never break again.

SAVE YOUR KIDNEY

National and local news outlets are reporting Kidney Failure linked to PPI's. Your Kidney extracts waste from blood, balance body fluids, form urine, and aid in other important functions of the body. Without it your body would be overrun by deadly toxins. Aloe helps your kidney function properly. Studies suggest, if you started taking aloe today; you'd see a big difference in the way you feel.

GUARANTEED RESULTS OR DOUBLE YOUR MONEY BACK

Due to the incredible results people are reporting, AloeCure is being sold with an equally incredible guarantee.

"We can only offer this incredible guarantee because we are 100% certain this product will work for those who use it," Says Dr. Leal.

Here's how it works: Take the pill exactly as directed. You must see and feel remarkable improvements in your digestive health, your mental health, in your physical appearance, the amount inflammation you have throughout your body – even in your ability to fall asleep at night!

Otherwise, simply return the empty bottles with a short note about how you took the pills and followed the simple instructions and the company will send you...Double your money back!

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering our readers up to 3 FREE bottles with their order.

This special give-away is available for readers of this publication only. All you have to do is call TOLL-FREE **1-800-746-2899** and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: JC025. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

THESE STATEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN EVALUATED BY THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION. THIS PRODUCT IS NOT INTENDED TO DIAGNOSE, TREAT, CURE OR PREVENT ANY DISEASE

Warming Up with Wood

A little research can help ensure safe, efficient wood burning

By Hannah McKenzie

Q: I recently read a news article about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) making new standards for wood stoves. I am hoping to install a wood stove in my home for next winter—possibly a refurbished model—but I am worried that these standards are going to make wood stoves and heating with wood more expensive.

A: Whenever a new standard from the EPA is put into effect, consumers and businesses worry about how it will impact costs. Thankfully, most standards take years of research and feedback from industry, consumers and researchers to find a mutually beneficial solution—in this case, cleaner air, warm homes and better products.

Burning wood produces tiny particulates and volatile organic compounds, which contribute to air pollution that is harmful and irritating to our respiratory systems. People who have endured smoke from recent forest fires, or even campfires, may be familiar with how our bodies can react to this sort of air pollution—asthma attacks, non-fatal heart attacks, emergency room visits, lost workdays, premature deaths and more. Adults with compromised health and children are most susceptible to harm. The pollution impact of a fire depends on the wood burned (curing time, species and moisture content) and the temperature of the fire (the hotter, the better).

Wood stove technology has dramatically improved since federal wood stove standards were first set in 1988: Fire boxes are now more insulated and allow for higher temperature fires that produce less air pollution and use less wood. In 2015, standards were updated to decrease particulates by 70 percent and increase burning efficiency, which means needing less wood. All new wood stoves will meet these standards by 2020. Refurbished models will still be available; however, most homeowners have been pleased with the benefits of the newer, more efficient models.

Before jumping into purchasing a wood stove, call your local fireplace professionals and make a plan. Wood stoves range from $500 to several thousand dollars. Repairing your chimney and preparing your living space to heat with wood may also cost $1,000 or more, but is certainly cheaper than a chimney fire. The National Fireplace Institute (nficertified.org) maintains a list of certified industry professionals. Talk with at least three to assess which size wood stove is right for your home, where it should be installed, and the condition of your chimney or flue. Budget for annual or biannual chimney sweeping and firewood-related purchases.

Selecting and storing firewood is critically important as well. To ensure the cleanest, hottest and most efficient burn, use dry hardwood, preferably sourced no further than 50 miles away that has cured for at least six months. Stacking firewood above the ground and covering it to allow for air circulation will keep it dry and ready for action.

In addition, operable smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are vital, as is ensuring the fire is always attended to.

There is a lot to consider when heating with wood, but thankfully there are many trusted resources online. "Heating with Wood" (bit.ly/unh-heating-wood) from the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension has the most thorough overview and links to detailed information.

The Green Building Advisor (greenbuildingadvisor.com) also has numerous articles about the pros and cons of heating with wood, including considerations for tightly built homes.

Best of luck with your project. May you have many warm and safe winters.

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant for Advanced Energy in Raleigh.

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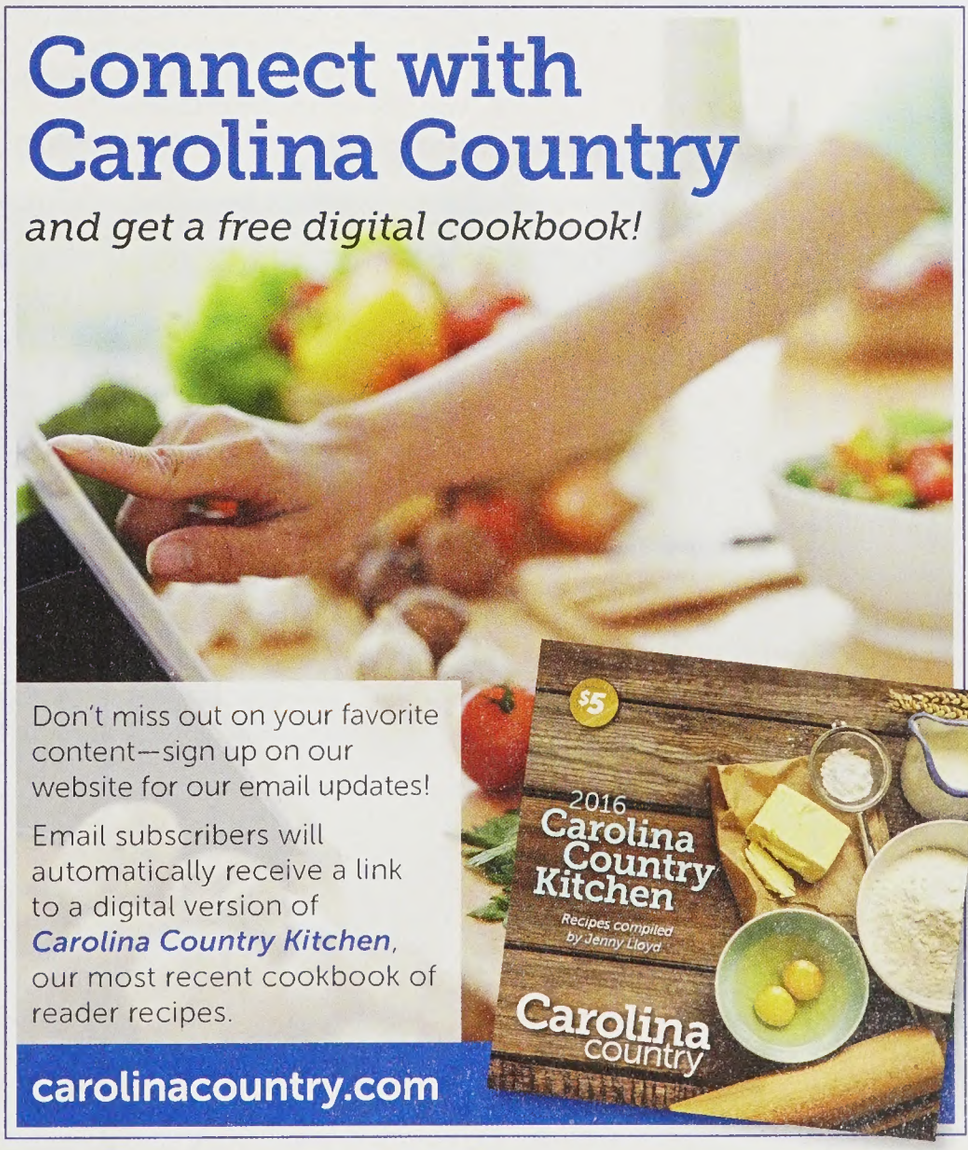
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Cocoa-Nutty Hot Chocolate Mix

With Coconut Whipped Cream

Make a batch of this decadent hot chocolate mix to enjoy often—and share, too! Topped with a dollop of fluffy coconut whipped cream, this dairy-free delight is just what we all need at the end of a chilly winter day...pajamas not included.

Hot Chocolate Mix

- 1 cup dark cocoa
- 1 cup coconut sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 2 whole vanilla beans, split and scraped

Whipped Cream

- 1 can full fat coconut milk

Garnish

- Maple syrup or honey
- Toasted coconut
- Shaved chocolate

For mix: Sift all dry ingredients together. Store in covered jar up to several months.

For coconut whipped cream: Chill canned coconut milk at least 24 hours. Drain coconut water and save for other uses. Whip cream with mixer until fluffy. Store in refrigerator up to 1 week.

To serve: Heat one cup of milk (unsweetened vanilla coconut or almond milk is delicious, but good old cow's milk works fine, if preferred). Stir in 2 tablespoons of mix.

Pour syrup or honey onto a small plate. Put toasted coconut into bowl. Dip rim of mug into syrup, then into coconut.

Pour mixed hot chocolate into rimmed mug. Top with dollop of Coconut Whipped Cream and dust with shaved chocolate. Enjoy!

Yield: About 10 servings

From Your Kitchen

Salted Caramel Fudge

- ½ cup butter
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1 cup white baking chips
- ½ teaspoon coarse sea salt

Line an 8-inch square baking pan with foil; coat with cooking spray. Melt butter in medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in sweetened condensed milk, brown sugar and corn syrup. Cook over medium heat until sugar is melted and mixture comes to a simmer, stirring frequently. Reduce heat to low. Simmer 10 minutes, stirring constantly, until mixture begins to thicken (you will begin to see the stir marks).

Remove from heat; let stand 30 seconds or until bubbles stop. Stir in baking chips; let stand 2 minutes. Stir until melted and smooth. Pour and spread into baking pan; sprinkle with salt. Refrigerate 2 hours or until firm.

Recipe courtesy of Jean Cook of Roxboro

Sage Pork Medallions

With Cherry-Madeira Pan Sauce

This recipe might sound "fancy," but it really is very quick to make. Gluten-free options are available for the broth and the Worcestershire sauce (always read labels carefully to confirm).

- 1 pound pork loin, trimmed (or pork tenderloin, if preferred)
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon ground sage
- 3 tablespoons oil, divided
- 1 large red onion, cut into slivers
- 1 cup dried cherries
- ½ cup Madeira wine
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup chicken or beef broth
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Fresh sage for garnish (optional)

Slice pork into ¼-inch thick pieces. Pound between 2 pieces of heavy plastic wrap to flatten, then cut into medallions. Dust both sides of cutlets with salt, pepper and sage.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in heavy skillet over medium high heat. Quickly sear pork pieces on both sides until lightly browned, about 2 minutes per side. Set aside.

Add remaining oil and sauté onions and cherries until tender. Deglaze pan with the wine, scraping up the browned bits. As wine reduces a bit, add vinegar, broth, Worcestershire and butter. Continue low boil until sauce reduces a little more. Taste and add salt if needed.

Note: If a thicker gravy is preferred, remove ½ cup of sauce and whisk in 1 tablespoon of cornstarch to make a slurry. Whisk slurry into pan sauce and heat until thickened.

Place cutlets into pan sauce. Garnish with sage and serve immediately.

Yield: 3–4 servings

carolinacountry.com/recipes
Pork Loin...or tenderloin? Wendy explains the difference between the two cuts (and how to cook each) on our website.

Wendy Perry, a culinary adventurist and blogger, chats about goodness around NC on her blog at WendysHomeEconomics.com.

Send Us Your Recipes

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—Jenny Lloyd, recipes editor

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